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EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL

Thesis Project

THE TRANSFORMATION-DRIVEN PARISH

BY

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The Transformation – Driven Parish

Douglas Fisher

Thesis/Project Doctorate of Ministry

Time: 9 am October 16, 2005

Place: Grace Episcopal Church, Millbrook, New York. Millbrook is known for horse stables, weekend homes for Manhattan residents, IBM employees and private schools.

It is time for the "family service" at Grace Church. As usual at the family service, everyone is arriving late. What is unusual are the faces of the people coming to church. Normally the congregation is all Anglo – about 100 people at the typical 9:am service. This time there are 50 or so Latino people as well. It is the first bilingual service in Grace's history.

The service booklets have all the prayers printed in English and Spanish, side by side. Some of the prayers are said in English, others in Spanish. Nothing is repeated except the sermon that has translations every few sentences. It works well because as always at the family service the sermon is interactive. I narrate a story and pre-rehearsed "Grace Church Players" act it out. The first story centers on the time the disciples are fishing at night (we have a boat as a prop) and a "ghost" walks across the water. "Peter" yells to him: "Is it you, Lord?" And the ghost replies in a panicky voice: "Stay in the boat! Whatever you do, just stay in the boat!" And Peter says, "That's not Jesus."

Another ghost appears. Peter asks, "Is it you, Lord?" And a mellow ghost shouts back, "Hang in there. Have a beer. Just relax." And Peter says, "That's not Jesus."

At this point the congregation is expressing the common language of laughter. Another ghost appears. Peter asks, "Is it you, Lord?" And the ghost says, "Peter, get out of the boat and walk on the water!" And Peter, climbing out of the boat, says: "That's Jesus!"

As the sermon continues, I tell the story of a child trying to push a big rock out of the road. As I do, a child is pushing against a huge, realistic looking rock made of plastic. The child can't move the rock and his father appears. The father asks him several times if he is using *all* his strength. The child keeps saying, "Yes, I am!" Finally the father says, "No you are not. Because you have not asked *me* to help you yet." The child asks for help and together they lift the rock. I invite all the children to come to the middle aisle and pass the rock from person to person until we get this rock away from the altar and out of the church, so no one's way will be blocked in coming to communion, so all people can come to Jesus.

At announcement time, the congregation is invited to ESL (English as Second Language) classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Wednesday night Spanish-speaking representatives from M&T Bank will be here, signing up people for bank accounts – even if they are undocumented. When attending coffee hour, people are invited to go to a table where they can learn more about the effort to repeal the New York State law that requires a social security number to obtain a driver's license.

The service continues. Some hymns are in Spanish. Some in English. We hold hands and say the Lord's Prayer in Spanish while teenagers hold up huge placards with the words printed there.

As the congregation leaves, Latino people are saying to me how happy they are to be there. Anglo people are telling me it was the best liturgy they had ever been to.

How did this happen? Why did it happen? How did we get to this event? What happened? And what happened next? And why were some 9 a.m. "regulars" not there? Is this possible in other parishes? Under what conditions and with what strategies? The rest of this dissertation is an attempt at answering those questions.

INTRODUCTION

"Transformation" is in the air. It is the buzz word for organizational reform, for societal change and for the journey of the soul. This dissertation will take the word out of the air and put in on the ground. Can parishes be sources of transformation? Parishes are the primary way most Christians intentionally and formally engage their faith. But are parishes merely blessing stations where people are comforted by the gospel? The reader will discover how the insights of brilliant leaders, theologians, and psychologists can be applied to parish life, leading the people of that parish a new depth of soul and to a new commitment to social justice through advocacy.

A "Brief" Look at Literature about Transformation

Personal transformation is well articulated by Robert Kegan in The Evolving Self[1]

and In Over Our Heads.[2] Faith development has many gurus, including James Fowler[3], Walter Conn[4], and John Westerhoff.[5] Societal transformation with personal transformation has been done by Paulo Friere[6]. Societal transformation as a theological concern is developed by Walter Brueggemann in many books including Cadences of Home[7] and The Prophetic Imagination.[8] Transforming parishes is being studied by many including Diane Butler Bass in The Practicing Congregation[9], C.Hadaway in Behold I Do a New Thing[10], Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook in A House of Prayer For All Peoples[11], Charles Olsen in Transforming Church Boards Into Communities of Spiritual Leaders[12], Mark Branson in Memories, Hopes and Conversations[13], and Leonard Sweet in The Church in the Emerging Culture.[14] Organizational transformation in the secular world has been studied even more extensively (with significant contributions from Harvard University) and includes Reframing Organizations[15] by Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal and Leadership on the Line[16] by Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky.

The gap in this literature lies at the intersection of all these works. No one (according to my research) has written about personal transformation with social transformation as the mission of a parish. No one has overlaid social transformation onto personal transformation in the context of parish life and mission. Theologian Richard Rohr (who forms much of his work from the spiritual insights of Thomas Merton) says, "true Christian spirituality requires *both* an inner journey to the depth of the soul *and* an outer journey to the broken of society. Where the two journeys connect is where we meet God."[17] Here is how I will attempt to do that.

Methodology

My first task is to develop a theoretical model by constructing a dynamic interaction between the *Continuum of Community Involvement and Transformation*, as developed by Arlin Rothauge and adapted by Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook and Ed Rodman of Episcopal Divinity School, (see Appendix A) and the innovative "model of the development of the self" created by Robert Kegan of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. This interaction will demonstrate how the "self' develops (or transforms) in a community committed to transformation of itself in an ever deepening commitment to justice. The community is a particular type of community – the parish. The next step will involve examining this context of various theologies motivating parish ministry.

This "model of interaction" will then be put into practice at Grace Episcopal Church, Millbrook, New York where I am rector. This is a growing, thriving community of faith (500 members and average Sunday attendance of 205) in a rural (and mostly "economically upscale") locale, 90 miles north of Manhattan. The focus of this experiment will be moving Grace Church from "charity" and "service" on the *Continuum* to "advocacy", the most difficult leap an organization can attempt, according to Dr. Kujawa. The movement to "justice", the last dimension of the *Continuum*, is beyond the scope of this study. As this experiment goes on, we will examine personal transformation through stories, surveys and shared reflection.

The experiment of putting theory into practice will include the following:

-deepening our existing alliance with the organization *Rural and Migrant Ministry* and finding new ways to "stand with" migrant workers

-developing a parish outreach to underserved Latino people in our area and advocating for the undocumented

-transforming the vestry from maintenance centered to dynamic leadership

-sermons developed using the model of interaction between personal transformation and social justice

-personal journeys of transformation with the guidance of a 30 day parish in-home retreat (based on the *19th Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola.)[18]

Thesis/Project Outline

As promised, the next chapter will be a theoretical interaction between the *Continuum of Community Involvement and Transformation* and Kegan's "development of the self."

The second chapter will apply this model to Grace Church in comparison and contrast to other models. The Transformation Driven Parish falls into that theological category called "ecclesiology". The "models approach" has been very popular since the ground-breaking book Models of the Church[19] by Avery Dulles. I will reshape Dulles' categories for the Church of the 21st century and show where my model fits. From this chapter on, all theology will be done through reflection on the lived experience of Grace Church.

The third chapter will be an application of the interaction of Kegan's "development of the self" with the *Social Justice Continuum* to the development of two sermons that invited advocacy for undocumented immigrants.

The fourth chapter will examine the model through the experience of leadership, specifically that of the vestry.

The fifth chapter will reflect on the outcomes of all this. Did we move from "charity" and "service" to "advocacy"? Was there personal transformation? Did the inner journey and outer journey meet and dare we say we met God there?

Definitions

The following terms will be used frequently. Here is how they are defined for the purpose of this dissertation:

Reign of God: That movement of God bringing all of creation into the fullness of life. This movement requires human involvement, cooperation, commitment.

Charity: The giving of money or possessions to those in need.

Service: The giving of time and talent to those in need.

Advocacy: "Standing with" and "taking the side" of those in need and lacking societal power.

Transformation: Genuine change in which individuals and/or groups grow into a new level of consciousness, meaning and action.

Full Stature of Christ: A life in which a person in community lives with compassion, mercy and hope, trusting in the Spirit working in the world.

Community: In the case of a parish, people living as brothers and sisters in Christ with the responsibilities that those relationships entail.

Learning Community: A community that is open-ended and looking for on-going guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Maintenance Mode: Doing what it takes to keep the parish at its present level of commitment to its members and to its mission.

Proclaimers: The announcement in word and deed that the Reign of God has begun already and inviting others to join this movement of compassion, mercy and hope.

Developmental: That movement by which individuals and communities grow in complexity, self-understanding, compassion, mercy and hope. I am using this term in relationship to *transformation*.

Undocumented Immigrants: Those people from other countries who live and work in the United States but are not citizens and do not have other legal papers such as "green cards."

Just Society: The time and place where all people share in God's abundance and have what they need to live fully human lives.

Limitations of this Thesis/Project

My reflections center on the activities of Grace Episcopal Church in Millbrook, New York. Although I am at times bringing in published stories of other parishes to support or develop my ideas, no other parishes, churches or communities of faith will be part of this project. I am not looking at ways that larger church bodies (dioceses, regions, conferences, national and international organizations) might be sources of transformation.

There are many theories of the development of consciousness. I will limit myself

to that of Robert Kegan as he has written in The Evolving Self and In Over Our Heads.

In choosing the alliance with *Rural and Migrant Ministry* and our outreach to the Latino population in our area, I am not considering many other arenas of action in which the gospel needs to be proclaimed. I am not looking at issues of war and peace, or environmental destruction or systematic economic inequities.

CHAPTER ONE- DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY AND THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CONTINUUM: A NEW SYNTHESIS

Robert Kegan of Harvard University has developed a developmental theory of the self in his books The Evolving Self and In Over Our Heads. Kegan's work builds on that of Lawrence Kohlberg and Jean Piaget. Kegan postulates a five stage development of the person to be seen in a heuristic and "spiral" process (as opposed to a linear development). He names these five stages in a variety of ways ("balances", "evolutionary grammars") but the one most helpful to my synthesis is "orders of consciousness." Here is a very brief summary of this spiral:

The first order of consciousness is simply response to environment. This elementary consciousness is not relevant to this thesis. The second order of consciousness is an awareness of one's needs and engaging "the other" to get those needs met. "I do this for you so you will do this for me." The third order of consciousness is loyalty to a group. "I do this because the group I value does this and I am loyal." In this order of consciousness the emphasis is on belonging and identifying with people "like me." The

fourth order of consciousness of the self recognizes that I am incomplete on my own. I value people who are *not* like me. Kegan provides a clear example of this order of consciousness by looking at a marriage. The Ables have been married for twenty-five years. They tell us "It's a funny thing. You marry someone because you feel you have found your soul mate, someone whose way of thinking and feeling about things is so much like your own. So you get married, and what do you notice? All the *differences*."[20] The Ables describe the years of coming to terms with these differences to the point where they respect and value their differences. One is an optimist while the other is a realist. One is an extrovert while the other is an introvert. One is strict with their children and one is more lenient. They conclude that "together we make a good team." In the fifth order of consciousness we go beyond engaging "the other" for the sake of forming an external "whole" and we recognize "the other" as necessary to our own lives as complex selves. Kegan again looks at a marriage of twenty five years as an illustration. Like the Ables, the Bakers[21] began their marriage appreciating how much alike they were. They, too, quickly noticed, and fought, over their differences. But they came to respect and cherish their differences not because it allowed them to "make a good team" as a couple, but because the other brings out another dimension of themselves. The extrovert does want to be simply an extrovert. He has an introverted side that the introverted partner lets him see. The one who is a realist has an optimist within that the other brings out. In order of consciousness five, the other brings out the depth, complexity and possibilities of the self.

Here is a brief summary of *The Continuum of Community Involvement and Social*

Transformation first developed by Arlin Rothauge and adapted by Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook and Ed Rodman of Episcopal Divinity School. The first stage of the *Continuum* is charity. This stage consists of giving money with a sense of immediate satisfaction for the giver, but there is a distance from the one served. Service is the next step and here one gives time and has temporary exposure to the one in need. The "social power" involved is "sustainability." In both these stages the emphasis is on "community awareness." Kujawa and Rodman contend this involves investigating, sensitizing to needs, discussing, negotiating and all for the goal of retributive justice (justice based on what is "fair" as determined by those in power).

Getting to the third stage is the most difficult leap for a community to make because it requires a new attitude and a new approach. There is a movement from "community awareness" to "community action". This will mean organizing, planning and acting on the plans, evaluating the outcomes, and all for the goal of restorative justice (pattern of social interaction that fosters human dignity, mutual respect and equal well-being.) The third stage in the *Continuum* is advocacy. Where charity gives money and service gives time, advocacy gives the heart. The relationship with "the other" demands a change in outlook. Advocacy means a "standing with" those who lack societal power. Charity and service can promote a "one up, one down" relationship, but advocacy creates a mission of peers. Advocacy disturbs the status quo and requires risk.

The fourth stage of the *Continuum* is that of true justice (love and power). The "giving" is empowerment. The "relationship" is that of developing networks. This is genuine shared power and social transformation. Just as Kegan's stage one consciousness

is too elementary for this Doctor of Ministry project, stage four of the *Continuum of Social Transformation* goes beyond what we can do at Grace Church at this time.

Synthesis

The first step in this synthesis is to translate Kegan's orders of consciousness (stages two through five) to church (community) participation. Order of consciousness two (meeting needs) is where many people enter church. The return of an adult to church is often precipitated by a personal crisis. The death of a loved one, a divorce, loss of employment, frustration with one's children, or a large scale tragedy like 9/11, may bring a person to a faith community. They are in pain and they hope a tradition of deep meaning can take that pain away. "I'll come here and maybe you can help me." Often when the pain goes away they go away too. Others live into order of consciousness three. And some start their church involvement there.

Order of consciousness three centers on belonging to a group and on loyalty. People participate in church because they have a sense of identity with this group. There is friendship, a social life, a sense of shared purpose and commitment. There is trust in the church leadership and in the theology that undergirds the tradition. There is a comfort with the liturgy and with whatever ministries the church has always done. It is my opinion that many church leaders would like people to remain at this order of consciousness because it is most supportive of the way the church is now.

At order of consciousness three, people are attracted to church and remain with it

because they feel a sense of belonging and often that is because "the people here are like me. I fit in." Order of consciousness four represents a radical break with this attitude. In order of consciousness four we look to embrace "the not me." The Christian theological name for this order could be "the Body of Christ." We recognize the Body of Christ is not complete without all people and their many gifts. At this level the only way to authentically "be the church" is by reaching out and embracing the tremendous diversity of God's people. "Difference" is not a threat to the church but the very way the church exists at all.

The above description "feels" like the story of the Ables' marriage. Together we make a great team. Order four represents a theology of the Body of Christ and order five represents a theology of mysticism. And order five feels like the story of the Bakers with their insight into the complex, multidimensional self. In this order we embrace the other, not simply to complete the team, but we do so because the other brings out another dimension of *my* soul and in that place my soul connects with the soul of the universe. I am more than who I think I am. My life is not complete unto itself. I am a mystery even unto myself, Thomas Merton tells us in numerous books. Traditional spirituality might say order five occurs when a person is open to God's will. A theology that sees even God's will as being open-ended, complex and evolving might express it the way Robert Kegan himself does:

> The Jewish mystics say that God makes human beings because God loves stories...Even God, the mystics are saying, does not know how we are to come out, so why should we wish for greater control or need it? Better perhaps for us to emulate this kind of God, whose pleasure in us comes not from our obedience to God's laws and regularities, however subject we may be to them, but from God's

> sheer fascination with how we live...For a God like this one, we ourselves are the objects of passionate engagement, endlessly let go of and recovered for a purpose God himself (or God herself) may not yet know.[22]

The next and last step in our synthesis is the creation of the points of contact between the Kegan model with its new church context and the *Continuum of Social Justice*. The first point of contact is Kegan's order three and the *Continuum's* charity and service. Every faith community has some ministry that involves charity and service. It is natural that an order three person would participate enthusiastically in whatever charity and service the church is doing. It is another way of belonging. If asked to participate, even a stressed, "time-poor" American, will give money or some volunteer time out of loyalty to the group. And the people being helped stay outside. They do not break into my world. I, or my money, go out to them. Paulo Friere in the classic Pedagogy of the Oppressed points out why we must go further than this:

> True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands- whether individuals or entire peoples- need to be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world.[23]

In Kegan's spiral of development, every time one is at any particular level, the invitation is already being made to move to a different order of consciousness. He writes: "Every new balance represents a capacity to listen to what before one could only hear irritably, and the capacity to hear irritably what before one could not hear at all."[24] Kujawa-Holbrook and Rodman tell us that it is at the level of charity and service that the

community social justice focus is "awareness." There is a willingness at this level to "investigate, sensitize, discuss, negotiate" for the sake of retributive justice. Perhaps a person of order three is hearing irritably the voices of those outside the community. This is growth because at order two, he could not hear those voices at all because he was consumed by meeting his own needs.

Just as order three personal development and charity and service in the *Continuum* seem to be a good fit, order four and advocacy interact. Advocacy for someone anchored at least temporarily in order three is going to be an almost impossible challenge. Advocacy radically opens a community to new possibilities. Distance and temporary exposure are no longer the standard of behavior. "Standing with the other" means the walls around the community have come down. "Us" and "them" no longer apply. Imagine how difficult this is for someone invested in "us". Later in this project I will write of the experience of Grace Church but one story here illustrates the tremendous gap between order three and the ability to engage in advocacy. A long time parishioner called me to say her family was leaving the parish to go to a nearby Episcopal Church where many of the members are also country club members. She told me she saw the population of Grace Church changing and she really "needs to pray on Sunday morning with the people I socialize with on Saturday nights." (I had this conversation *before* Latino people came to our church. The change the parishioner was referring to was the influx of families who sent their children to public school instead of private school.)

Advocacy provokes order four consciousness and order four consciousness leads to advocacy. This interplay of personal development and social transformation does not

allow for linear thinking. Advocacy and order four consciousness are interwoven in that they both necessitate a movement from exclusive to inclusive. Kegan, developing an idea of Kohlberg, writes "evolving people have a capacity to transcend an ultimate orientation to exclusive connections on behalf of more inclusive ones. This shift...is the consequence of meaning-evolution, which is not a matter of increasing differentiation alone, but of increasing relationship to the world."[25] In my synthesis, order four consciousness, that goes from exclusive to inclusive, necessarily involves advocacy if there is to be an "increasing relationship to the world."

Order four consciousness and advocacy share the willingness to risk. This risk is articulated by Ian Douglas when he writes of mission: "Mission is not defined by activity, geographic location, or holy orders. Rather it is defined by the process of crossing frontiers from the known to the unknown, from the safe to the dangerous, from the comfortable to the uncomfortable."[26]

In this synthesis, order four consciousness (or at least the movement toward it) is necessary for advocacy but order five is not. This is good because Kegan believes order five consciousness takes a lifetime to achieve and the poor should not have to wait that long. "In our longitudinal study it is rare to see people moving beyond the fourth order, but when they do, it is never before their forties."[27] People move toward order five while involved in advocacy because of the stories they encounter. Theologian James Cone writes a warning of what happens if people do not move toward stage five:

> Indeed when I understand truth as story, I am more likely to be open to other people's stories. People become enclosed within their own social context, treating their distorted visions of reality as the whole truth. And they feel they

> must destroy other people's stories, which bear witness that life can be lived another way.[28]

It is my contention that the parish is not simply a place where we bless people and comfort them with the gospel. For the parish to be a vehicle of the Reign of God, a Reign that has begun but is still moving toward fulfillment, we need to provoke and guide transformation. That transformation is a dynamic interplay of personal growth and societal change. My synthesis of the personal developmental work of Kegan and the *Continuum of Social Justice* indicates the arena for "The Transformation-Driven Parish" is in that movement from order three consciousness to order four, and from charity and service to advocacy. That is the point in the spiral of personal development, in the continuum of justice, that parishes can make a huge difference. Inspire people to move beyond loyalty, and give them paths for advocacy, and watch the Holy Spirit light a fire.

Thus far we have made the connection between personal development and social justice but there is an important dimension missing: context. I am not looking at personal development and social justice coming together in a social work agency or in a political party or in a corporation with a social consciousness. I am look at this dynamic interplay in the local church structure called the parish. To proceed further in looking at how a "transformation-driven parish" might come about, we need to look at existing models of churches and how a "transformation-driven parish" might develop from them.

CHAPTER TWO- A NEW APPROACH TO MODELS OF THE CHURCH

In A House of Prayer for All Peoples: Congregations Building Multiracial Community Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook writes:

> More than secular political movements, economic theory, or social analysis (although all three are essential), congregations can be sources of change and authentic racial reconciliation on the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels of human society…I believe that congregations are in fact one of the few places in our society where people of diverse backgrounds can work together constructively for the good of humankind.[29]

Kujawa-Holbrook's insight, consistent with this Doctor of Ministry project, requires we look at the reality of congregations to see how transformation may occur there. In this chapter, I will attempt to do that.

In 1972 Avery Dulles wrote a ground-breaking book entitled Models of the Church. It was significant because at a time when the church and society were undergoing great change, Dulles was able to capture part of the ongoing "mystery" of the church in a way that celebrated diversity in theology and mission. At a time when people were unclear as to what Vatican II might mean, Dulles gave shape to a variety of theologies. At a time when people were in radical disagreement as to what the church is called to be, Dulles showed how these theologies could not only co-exist, but serve to enhance each other.

In the Roman Catholic context of the 1970's, Dulles offered the models of "institution," "mystical communion," "sacrament," "herald," and "servant." Those

models worked well in that context and still offer us in the 21st century and in the Episcopal Church much to reflect on. For our time, I offer the following models:

-Church as "inclusive community"

-Church as "community for justice"

-Church as "emergent"

-Church as "pilgrims on a spiritual journey"

-Church as "living tradition"

For each model, I will attempt to provide a theology, a scriptural basis and a "saint." In addition I will look at the strengths and weaknesses of each model, both theologically and in parish experience. Although each model is unique, there is much overlapping. What I say about each one may be true of the others as well, although perhaps to a lesser degree.

Why "Models?"

C. Kirk Hadaway in Behold I Do A New Thing: Transforming Communities of Faith provides a rationale *and* a warning for using a models approach to ecclesiology. He writes:

> As with all typologies, the types themselves are not real. Churches are real. Types are concepts that reduce the incarnational complexity of real churches to a set of key characteristics. Is it easy to see how your church fits in one type better than another? Does seeing the distinction between types help you understand churches better? If the answer to both questions is yes, we have a useful model. Even so, we need to resist the temptation to say my church is one of the types or another. It is not. Your congregation is unique.[30]

Inclusive Community

Scripture: "The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind." (Matthew 13:47)

Story of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:24-29)

Saint: Peter and Paul

The inclusive community is one that truly welcomes all people. It is lived out from the theology that grace is free and offered to all. God's love has no limits and no boundaries so all are invited *as they are*. Hopefully, participation in the church will lead to transformation but transformation is not a prerequisite for belonging, nor is the transformation intended in a certain direction (such as hoping gay people will become straight, or Republicans become Democrats).

One dimension of the inclusive community is that of equality and social justice. The round table is a powerful image for this, as Letty Russell demonstrates powerfully in Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church. "The table principle looks for ways that God reaches out to include all those whom society and religion have declared outsiders and invites them to gather round God's table of hospitality. The measure of the adequacy of the life of the church is how it is connected to those on the margin."[31] Russell shows how one does theology from where one sits at that table and all the voices from the many places need to be heard. Our power structures of hierarchy have suppressed those voices. In the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman, Jesus (the one who "grows in age, wisdom and understanding") learns how to listen to a woman he originally did not include at the table.

But there is another challenge to the inclusive community when seen in another dimension. How do we hold together a community with many different viewpoints? That is a pressing question for churches in the United States today, a deeply divided country. How can Democrats and Republicans, liberal Christians and conservative Christians, gather in one parish?

There is an old story I have reworked for an Episcopal setting. One time mountain climbers were making their way up a mountain, a group of people who did not know each other. Suddenly there is a scream and mountain climber Joe sees mountain climber Bob hanging by his finger nails to a cliff. Joe runs over just as Bob is saying "God help me!" Joe grabs his hands and intends to hold on until help comes. Joe says, "I heard you call out to God. So you are a believer?" Bob says, "Yes, I'm Christian." Joe says, "I am, too. I'm Episcopalian." Bob says, "I'm Episcopalian." Joe says, "Wow, how about that. Eucharist centered parish or morning prayer?" Bob says, "Eucharist centered." Joe says, "Me, too. '79 prayerbook or '28?" Bob says, "79". Joe says, "Me, too. '82 hymnal?" Bob says, "Yes, '82 hymnal." Joe says, "Rite One or Rite Two?" Bob says, "Rite One." At which point Joe lets go of his hands, dropping him off the cliff while shouting at him, "Die you heretic dog!"

The story is a light hearted way of looking at a serious problem for the inclusive community. Can the inclusive community stay together without litmus tests? W.Paul Jones has written a book about this that I found helpful – Worlds Within a Congregation: Dealing With Theological Diversity.[32] Jones sums up the rich theological work of Ernst Troeltsch who recognized the diversity of theology and called for churches to be "homes

within which Christians of varying outlook can live and work together in peace." But that has not happened. Jones writes:

> ...the liberalism of which Troeltsch was a part failed to create the variegated church for which Troeltsch had hoped. The result has not been a creative tension of deep commitment within a community of diversity, but a conflict of antagonists in deep polarization. Jurgen Moltmann has identified this same crisis as the polarization of relevance and identity. He calls for a third way, one emerging between "absolutist theocracy and unproductive tolerance."[33]

That term "unproductive tolerance" is important. Fredrica Thompsett-Harris writes in We Are Theologians: "Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa is fond of saying that if an elephant is stepping on a mouse's tail, the mouse will not appreciate a bystander's neutrality; neutrality in a situation of injustice places us on the side of the oppressor."[34] This is a key dilemma for the inclusive community. Peter and Paul, with very different opinions within the early church were able to co-exist. Can we? Should we in situations of injustice? And how far do those systems of injustice go into our North American churches?

Jones spends the rest of his book attempting to forge this "third way" by looking at the different "theological worlds" people inhabit and how the gospel might break into that world without being judgmental and excluding. He concludes:

> Christians are called to a dual commitment. On the one hand, the church must lead the way to a place we have never been before – insisting upon diversity as an undebatable given. On the other hand, the church must reclaim its unique call to spiritual formation – the accountable nurturing of persons within a community of viable alternatives toward a commitment that alone provides the passion worth living.[35]

At Grace Church, Millbrook we try very hard to be an inclusive community.

People of all "theological worlds" tell me my invitation to communion is the most important thing I say. The wording varies from week to week but the theme is always: "God's love is limitless and boundless. The job of the Church is never to present obstacles to communion but to guarantee you the right to communion." It is their way of saying how important inclusivity is to them.

To allow and encourage theological and political debate within the inclusive community, I frequently say and write, "We are not the Body of Christ because we *agree* with each other. We are the Body of Christ because we *care* about each other." But the strength, weakness and challenge of this inclusive model are demonstrated every time I preach about Iraq and we lose members.

Community For Justice

Scripture: "He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty." Luke 1:51-53

Saint: Gandhi

Walter Brueggemann is known as a brilliant scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures but it is one of his Easter sermons has been an inspiration to me. Here is the ending of that sermon:

> Easter is not just an ancient oddity. Easter is an unsettling way in the world that continues to have socioeconomic, political, and human implications. Easter is not a 'spiritual' event, but a surging power that touches all of life. The

> Easter question for us is not whether you can get your mind around the resurrection, because you cannot. Rather the question is whether you can permit in your horizon new healing power, new surging possibility, new gestures to the lame, new ways of power in an armed, fearful world, new risk, new life, leaping, dancing, singing, praising the power beyond all our controlled powers.[36]

The New Life of Easter challenges our political and economic structures. Coming from another faith tradition, Gandhi said one can't be holy in the 20th century unless involved in the political order. At Episcopal Divinity School clearly the *Missio Dei* is seen as bringing about justice in this world.

Contrast this theology and this mission with a study produced by Robert Wuthnow, The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism. Wuthnow writes:

> Across Christian traditions, the leaders we talked with agreed that the spiritual well-being of their members was the single thing their congregations most strongly valued. They pursue that goal in corporate worship and in actively supporting individual spiritual growth...Also very near the top is the goal of providing for the social and communal needs of congregation's members. Whether providing a "family-like atmosphere" or "fellowship activities," all four families of U.S. Christians are equal in the high value they give to taking care of the spiritual and social needs of their own members.[37]

The justice model seems to be more alive on the national and diocesan levels than it is on the parish level. Every General Convention and many Diocesan conventions pass resolutions that express the Easter values expressed above, but on the parish level the justice model is not as obvious (as seen in the Wuthnow study).

There is hope for the justice model according to Wuthnow. He calls his work The Quiet Hand of God because his studies indicate mainline Protestants do want political

action – but they want it done quietly and behind the scenes – in other words, not like the evangelicals and Roman Catholics. But Wuthnow has hope we can even move beyond quiet influence. He writes:

> The problem is that full participation in the wider society also exposes people to cultural messages that instill complacency- messages about material success, comfortable life styles, and self interest. Yet many of the issues in which mainline members claim to be interested run counter to these messages: overcoming racism and intolerance, helping the poor, protecting the environment, and working for peace and justice. These issues are not likely to be pursued actively and aggressively unless mainline members and their leaders develop a clear oppositional stance toward certain aspects of the wider culture. A stance of this kind is likely to be encouraged by a growing appreciation of the church's own gospel message.[38]

Self-awareness in leaders is important in all models. For myself, I know that I desire being part of a community of justice. As a preacher I would love to fire up the "converted" and have the questions center on *how* we might achieve our goals and not on what those goals are in the first place. But that is not where my community is now, so I need to hold this model as a goal, help people work toward it, and be aware of what all the other models have to offer.

Emergent Church

Scripture: "The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." (Matthew 13:33)

Saint: Martin Luther King

Emergent Church theology is new and developing, but already offers a viable model of church. For my study of this model, I rely most heavily on the work of Brian

McLaren (Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel[39]and his website emergentvillage.com), Leonard Sweet (The Church in the Emerging Culture)[40] and Reggie McNeal (The Present Future[41] and Revolution in Leadership.)[42]

Leaders in this movement have used the word emergent because they see our era as entirely new. McLaren writes, "In English, the word 'emergent' is normally an adjective meaning coming into view, arising from, occurring unexpectedly, requiring immediate action (hence its relation to 'emergency'), characterized by evolutionary emergence, or crossing a boundary (as between water and air.)"[43] For emergent church theologians, we live at a time of several paradigm changes:

-colonial to postcolonial

-superpowers and the threat of nuclear war to wars of terrorism and genocide

-modernism to postmodernism (from a world of absolutes to questioning and searching)

-denominationalism in religion to religious diversity

In light of this, McLaren says "we must imagine and pursue the development of new ways of being followers of Christ."[44]

Emergent church theologians judge the Church as we have known it since the time of Constantine to be dying. McNeal pulls no punches: "The church culture in North America is an institutional expression of religion that is part a civil religion and part a club where religious people hang out with other people, whose politics, worldview and lifestyle match theirs."[45] Fellow Emergent Church theologian Leonard Sweet writes:

> Social anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss dubbed societies open to change "hot cultures" – they warm quickly to the new and assimilate change. By contrast, cold cultures are insular, expending a great deal of energy to maintain central control. A cold culture is the enemy of renewal, holding itself hostage to its history rather than to its heritage. A heritage can be all but lost in the mists of official history and officious memory. [46]

While keeping the post-modern world and all those previously mentioned paradigm shifts as our context, emergent church theologians go back to the person and historical context of Jesus.

> Jesus tapped into this widespread sentiment of disillusionment with religion but hunger for God with his teaching about the kingdom of God and how people could become part of it. His emphasis was on universal accessibility as opposed to the exclusivity of the Pharisees. His teaching was a radical departure from the legalistic behavioral approach of Judaism. He taught and practiced grace in terms of how God deals with people. At the same time he elevated standards of personal behavior by looking past mere externals to internal heart motivations. He preached that God was for people, not against them. He defined the litmus test for genuine spirituality in terms of one's relationships – our relationships with God and with other people.[47]

Emergent Church theologians decry "churchianity" and see Jesus beginning a movement that leads to the kingdom of God. Emergent church theologians clearly see the world as the place for the mission. They have no interest in transforming the church. The gospel calls us to transform the world. That is why the scriptural image for this church is the leaven parable. The church is leaven in the world, transforming the world even as the church is changed into something different – the yeast no longer looks like yeast, it looks like bread. Martin Luther King is the saint of this movement because Martin Luther King did not invite people into church. He invited them into the streets. He read the signs of his times and acted on them.

Postmodernism is often criticized. But not in the emergent church movement:

> Postmodernism is at heart a spiritual movement. It is an alternative to the nihilism that so many people predicted to be the next phase of Western thought. Postmodernism refuses to be forced into the synthesis of the Hegelian dialectic. It allows for ambiguity; it countenances opposing notions at the same time (quantum physics, foundational to the postmodern world, asserts that light is both a particle and a wave); it intensely refuses a sacred-secular dichotomous view of life. Everything is sacred; nothing is sacred – both are expressed in post-modern thought. [48]

The emergent church movement sees liturgy in need of radical reform. Liturgy reflects an outdated world view and is disconnected from the mission to transform the world. And it needs the gifts of technology for a creative expression of the gospel.

What an emergent church looks like is still taking shape. (Examples are given at emergentvillage.org)[49] And it challenges the church to an exciting future by taking the mission of Jesus into the world. "The North American Church faces a critical decision. The decision is about what agenda the church will pursue. The options are two: thinking and doing church as refuge or thinking and doing church as mission."[50] It challenges us to a greater creativity in liturgy with an awareness of culture and technology. But, as with all our models, it is incomplete. How can a church be inclusive if it does not allow for continuity with the past? Those comfortable with older form of religious expression would have a difficult time in the church of seekers. There is a danger that "seekers" could become another form of the institutionalized sect they reject. And if the emergent church is incarnational, as it proclaims, embracing the ways God acts now, how can it reject so completely the ways God acted in other times and cultures? The gap between

Jesus and now is portrayed too simplistically.

Pilgrims on a Spiritual Journey

Scripture: the story of Peter and Paul healing the lame man (Acts 3)

Saint: Augustine and Julian of Norwich

Richard Rohr, a Franciscan, says we are all invited on two journeys – an inner journey and an outer journey. The inner journey is into the soul. It is the journey to who we truly are. The soul is the only place that can hold all of who we are – the good and the bad. In that journey we find ourselves as broken creatures beloved by God. That, however, is not the whole of the spiritual life. We also need to take an outer journey – to those broken by life, society, the world. We need to take a journey beyond self to the poor. Those two journeys together bring us to the living God.

The three models of church already discussed in this thesis/project do the outer journey well. Those models need this one for a fuller picture of Church. The books I will rely on for many of these ideas are Spiritual Awakening: A Guide to Spiritual Life in Congregations[51] by John Ackerman and The Evolving Self and In Over Our Heads Robert Kegan. And throughout my own approach to the spiritual journey are the ideas of St. Ignatius of Loyola as they are expressed in The Spiritual Exercises.

Emergent church theologians speak of paradigm shifts and so does Ackerman. Emergent church theologians speak of ending the notion of church as "programs." And so does Ackerman. But where they place their emphasis is entirely different. Ackerman writes: "The paradigm shift I am after is from pastor as program director to pastor as

spiritual director...This is not the formulation of something new but the recovery of something original."[52] (Hence the choice of the celebrated spiritual director Julian of Norwich as a saint for this model.) Wuthnow's study, however, would argue this is not a paradigm change but continuing the way people have always thought of church (see above).

In the "Pilgrims on A Spiritual Journey" model "the goal I have for every member of our church is to learn to recognize God's hand and voice in every aspect of life."[53] That is why Augustine should be the saint of this model. Augustine was the first person in history to write an autobiography. He saw God active in the events of his life – from the stealing of pears as a young boy (simply because he wanted them) through his relationships, his mother's prayers, and the invitation to "pick up and read." The image of holding the hand of a dying person is the image of this model because the ministry of presence is at the core of this journey. God acts and we live within that action. Our presence, often unspoken, is God acting with compassion in this world.

The Spiritual Pilgrims model places great emphasis on offering opportunities for prayer. Sunday liturgy, of course, gets the most attention but in this model a variety of prayer groups might meet throughout the week. The prayer need not be "traditional." It is my experience that the more prayerful a parish is, the more people seek to experiment with prayer.

The "Spiritual Pilgrims" model is always looking for personal transformation. That cannot be divorced from societal transformation but the priority is on the personal.

Without going into the depth of wisdom that is found in Ackerman, Kegan and

Ignatius, it is important for the "Spiritual Pilgrims" model that the journey of life is acknowledged as deep, rich and abundant. For a parish to take on the "Spiritual Pilgrims" model means an on-going and never ending development of the skills required to accompany people on this journey. That does not mean the mentors of this journey need to be a professional or clergy class. But it does mean that the community takes on the challenge of going deeper and deeper into complex and difficult questions of life.

The "Spiritual Pilgrims" church invites in people who are searching, knowing that search often begins in pain. It is often a traumatic event – death of a family member, the onset of serious illness, loss of a job, divorce- that leads people to the church. In Kegan's model these people are often at "consciousness two" – they have a need and they are hoping the church will meet that need, meaning "take the pain away." A "Spiritual Pilgrims" church will meet these people where they are and help them move through stages of transformation to higher consciousness. Too often churches are pleased when people move to "consciousness three"- loyalty – and then hope they stay there. The genuine "Spiritual Pilgrims" church help people move beyond loyalty to an internalization of values (consciousness four) and to an openness to God's action (consciousness five). Consciousness four and five in Kegan require an embrace of diversity. Loren Mead in Transforming Congregations for the Future says this well: "Congregations of the future need to be congregations that nurture varieties of sensitivities to the bad news of the world and respond to those many forms of pain. These congregations will be open to more than one point of view."[54]

My parish, Grace Church, is very strong in the "Spiritual Pilgrims" model.

Spiritual direction and counseling take up most of my time. Lay people have been trained to do this and they are very active in helping others through life's complexity. Many people come to our twice-a-year invitation to experience the Spiritual Exercises through an in-home retreat (Ignatius' 19th Annotation). Our "Community of Hope" trains lay chaplains in pastoral care. As a result, we have superb pastoral care here.

The "Spiritual Pilgrims" model is very important. But it is incomplete. As Richard Rohr says, there must be an inner journey and an outer journey. As the other models need the "Spiritual Pilgrims" model for completion, the "Spiritual Pilgrims" model needs the others as well. And as Rohr points out, both journeys meet in the same place.

Living Tradition

Scripture: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16: 18)

Saint: William White

This model is on the far side of "emergent church". And although Wuthnow's study indicates people most want a "spiritual pilgrims" model (and most clergy want to provide that model), I believe "living tradition" is the dominant model of parish experience.

Here is what I mean by the "living tradition" model, with its strengths and its weaknesses. The book I will rely on is The Practicing Congregation: Imaging a New Old Church [55] by Diana Butler Bass.

Bass supports tradition as ardently as emergent church theologians support

radically new innovations: "if the very definition of religion is a 'chain of memory,' the practice of anamnesis, the recalling the memory of the past, must be central to congregational life. Insofar as congregations understand themselves as living communities in a lineage of witnesses, their work entails redefining and adapting tradition that they have received and must pass on." [56]

Tradition is not static. Tradition grows and develops as communities respond to the Spirit. Many people have lost touch with the tradition and Bass urges them to enter into a process of "retraditioning." By that she means:

> ...a process wherein congregations are responding to the larger cultural results of modern fragmentation by creating communities that provide sacred space for the formation of identity and meaning, the construction of pockets of connectedness to the long history of Christian witness and practice in a disconnected world. As one cultural theorist summarizes it, 'Everything seems to conspire these days against distant goals, life-long projects, lasting commitments, eternal alliances, immutable identities.' Accordingly, life is random, contingent, and fractured.[57]

Bass gives several examples of tradition leading to tension when it comes into conflict with other aspects of the tradition. I have numerous examples of that conflict from my six years at Grace Church. Sometimes it leads to productive discussions about the Reign of God. Sometimes it just leads to people drawing lines in the sand.

The scripture for this model is "upon this rock I will build my church" because it contains two keys words that illustrate the inherent tension of the model. The church is on "rock." It has a base, a starting point that is solid. Yet Jesus promises that the church will "build." It will go beyond the rock. It will always be under construction.

The image for this model is Holy Communion. Communion is part of the tradition

from the start and it is something we can never let go of – "do this in memory of me." How we celebrate Holy Communion has changed dramatically from that first communion in the Upper Room. And how we celebrate it in the future and in different cultures will continue to change. In deciding how that change might happen we could listen to our brothers and sisters in the Emergent Church.

The saint for this model is William White. White desperately wanted to keep the Anglican tradition alive in the new country of the United States of America. He wanted continuity and connection to the Apostolic Tradition. But he knew the polity of the church needed to change dramatically for this time and place. With grace and skill he directed that change and empowered the Episcopal Church along the lines of the American Experiment.

There is another dimension to the "living tradition" model. Most people are connected to church in a very superficial way. The CEO's (Christmas Easter Only) outnumber the regular attendees in almost every church. For them the church is there for those feast days and for weddings and funerals. When there are changes in something involving Christmas, Easter, or liturgical changes in weddings or funerals, they protest far more strongly than the weekly faithful. (Five years later I am still reminded how upset people are that I moved the Christmas Pageant off of Christmas Eve and replaced it with Eucharist. I still get requests at funerals to use the 1928 Prayerbook – from families that are rarely here.) In struggling churches that consider closing, these are the first people to demand the church stay open. The church is part of "their tradition" and therefore needs to exist. All this means something to them on some level.

This problematic dimension of the "living tradition" approach to church will always be with us. A productive way to deal with it is to go back to the "inclusive model" and accept people where they are. And then use the rare opportunities when they are present, to invite them to transformation in a non-judgmental way. The fact that they are here at crucial moments in the life journey (marriage, birth of a child, death) is a faith opportunity. My most evangelical sermons are at weddings, baptisms and funerals. It is my version of street corner preaching. Christmas and Easter should not be times when the clergy and the congregation are judgmental of those they rarely see. They are opportunities to offer a journey of transformation.

The "living tradition" model allows us to build on the work the Spirit has done through the "great cloud of witnesses" that surrounds us in prayer and in action. And it keeps us from making our own time absolute. This era, too, will pass away. Postmoderism will be replaced by another approach to reality. Perhaps this model is the one that takes Incarnation most seriously, because it allows for the Spirit taking flesh in each time and place and never being contained in any one culture or period of time.

A weakness of this model is how "church-centered" it is. Perhaps this model takes the Incarnation the least seriously because it does not stress the "Spirit in the World". It does not stress transformation of society. The "living tradition" has great strengths but needs the other models.

Reflection on the Models

As Dulles so astutely pointed out, no one model can capture the Mystery. It is good that each of these models is inadequate and need others to come closer to a complete model of Church, knowing we will never get there. The Mystery will never be exhausted.

Let's apply Kegan's order five consciousness to our thinking about parishes and their complex nature. Remember the story of the Bakers, married for twenty-five years. The Bakers say:

> If a conflict does not go away after a while, it is a good bet that one or both of us has gotten drawn into being too identified with our more comfortable position. Like the end we're holding so passionately is our whole story, our whole truth in the matter. When we get out of the grip of our more familiar side then the fight doesn't feel as if the other one is trying to make us give up anything. The fight becomes a way for us to recover our own complexity.[58]

Let's apply this to the models of church. A church might live out the "spiritual pilgrims" model. The people in that church may be threatened by church dedicated to social justice. Or, in a transformed consciousness, they may see the work of that justice driven church as important. They are happy that others are doing it, but they don't want to get involved themselves. A deeper level of consciousness would see the justice-driven church as appealing to something in the spiritual pilgrims that desires the "outer journey." The justice-driven church would not be a threat but an invitation to the spiritual pilgrims to discover another side of themselves. Think of this in the other direction. The "community of justice" can't sustain itself if it is only about justice. Burn out will occur. Or self-righteousness: we are on the side of the poor and we are better than you. There is

something in justice-driven people that needs the nurture of the soul. The outer journey needs the inner journey, not to be done by others but to be done by us.

The "living tradition" church needs the insights of the emergent church not as "complementary" to their own time-tested truths, but because within themselves the "living tradition" people know they need innovative ways to convey the Good News. As Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook has said, "Because churches are full, does not mean they are bad."[59] They are doing something that appeals to the postmodern world, and the living tradition church wants that appeal. At the same time, I'm sure emergent church people wish they did not have to begin from scratch each time. There is something in them that asks, "What worked before? I know the church did not begin with me." (Or, more likely, "the church did not disappear with Constantine and now is reappearing.") There is something in the emergent church that would resonate with the insights of Diana Bass.

The inclusive church will always need the insights and grace of others if it is to be inclusive. Inclusivity does not mean bland tolerance. It means a dynamic embrace of what the other has to offer because that makes us all closer to "the full stature of Christ." An inclusive church welcomes the challenge of justice, the innovation of the emergent model, the deep soul journey of the spiritual pilgrims, and the "great cloud of witnesses" of the living tradition because all of this brings the individual and the community into the path of transformation.

The focus of this project is the movement of Grace Church from service and charity on the social justice continuum into advocacy, specifically advocacy for the undocumented immigrants of New York. At first glance, it would seem that the "justice"

model would be the ideal for such a transformation. But all the models feed into this transformation. As mentioned earlier, Grace Church responds powerfully to the call to open communion. They see that as a radical alternative to the churches around us. When I preached about the mustard seed that becomes the biggest of shrubs, not the cedars of Lebanon, but the biggest of shrubs where all the birds would have room for their nests, the congregation responded with great energy. The inclusive community invites all to communion, and it invites all to the fullness of life socially, economically, politically.

The emergent church demands we become aware of what is happening now, in our context. Our mission emerges from our time and culture. And our location geographically, our status economically, our power politically point us toward advocacy for migrant workers and Latino immigrants.

At Grace Church we do the "spiritual pilgrims" model best. The journey of each person, which is taken so seriously here and held in such compassion, should lead, and has, led to compassion for others. As Richard Rohr says, the inner journey does meet the outer journey.

The "living tradition" is important to advocacy because the tradition gives us that great cloud of witnesses that inspire us to transformation. Every child in Sunday School at Grace Church knows Jonathan Daniels. They know Damian of Molokai. They know Dorothy Day and Barbara Harris. Advocacy is not a new thing in Christianity. It is rooted in the dynamic stories of those who have gone before us.

For Grace Church to move from charity and service to advocacy will require a dynamic mix of all five models. And it will involve recognizing "spiritual pilgrims" as

our dominant model. That is the tradition here and it is the model around which people gather. It is a good base to start from and to return to, but can never be the whole "Mystery".

CHAPTER THREE- TRANSFORMATIVE PREACHING

The Advocacy "Action"

> The imperial consciousness lives by its capacity to still the groans and to go on with business as usual as though none were hurting and there were no groans. If the groans become audible, if they can be heard in the streets and markets and courts, then the consciousness of domination is already jeopardized...Jesus had the capacity to give voice to the very hurt that had been muted, and therefore newness could break through...Suffering made audible and visible produces hope, articulated grief is the gate of newness, and the history of Jesus is the history of entering into the pain and giving it voice.[60]

On May 24, 2006 eighty-two members of Grace Church gave voice to the suffering of undocumented people by taking out a full page ad in *The Millbrook Roundtable* entitled "A Call for Compassion" (full text in appendix B). The ad began with "We, the undersigned of Grace Episcopal Church, Millbrook, call for an end to New York State's practice of requiring that all applicants for a driver's license present the DMV with a social security number. Effectively, the State (unlike most other states) requires proof of legal immigrant status." The ad went on to provide two practical reasons for this call. One, the common good is served when people who qualify to drive

do so with a license and insurance. Two, this law "forces many immigrants further into the shadows, adding to the burden of fear and insecurity they face every day as they try to provide for their families." This was followed by our theological and biblical reasons for this call. The eighty-two names are the centerpiece of the ad, with this quote from The Most Reverend Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church at the bottom of the page: "As Christians, we are called to remember the Gospel mandate to extend hospitality to the stranger. As Episcopalians, we embrace a baptismal covenant that requires we seek and serve Christ in all persons."

An Analysis of How and Why We Acted

The title of the ad is very significant for the interlocking theme of this thesis project: a model of interaction between the *Continuum of Community Involvement and Transformation* and Robert Kegan's "development of the self." "Compassion" appeals to people on all orders of development. Defined by many spiritual directors as "reducing the distance from the head to the heart," compassion can be comforting and challenging at the same time. It can be appealing on a surface level of feelings and on a deep level of soul. Development of the self involves compassion. At the same time, on the societal level, it can be revolutionary. Brueggemann tells us:

> Jesus in his solidarity with the marginal ones is moved to compassion. Compassion constitutes a radical form of criticism, for it announces that the hurt is to be taken seriously, that the hurt is not to be accepted as normal and natural but it is an abnormal and unacceptable condition for humanness. In the arrangement for "lawfulness" in Jesus time, as in the ancient empire of Pharaoh, the one unpermitted quality of relation was compassion. Empires are never built

> or maintained on the basis of compassion. The norms of law (social control) are never accommodated to persons, but persons are accommodated to the norms. Otherwise the norms will collapse and with them the whole power arrangement. Thus the compassion of Jesus is to be understood not simply as a personal emotional reaction but as a public criticism in which he dares to act upon his concern against the entire numbness of his social context. Empires live by numbness.[61]

"A Call or Compassion" represents a watershed event in the life of Grace Church. It is clearly a movement from charity and service to advocacy. There were many dimensions to how we arrived at such a position, the most important one being the many meetings we had with Latino people in which this need was brought to light. The Anglo community did not choose this particular issue (the driver's license law) because we thought it was valid. The Latino members of our community clearly articulated this issue as vitally important to them. (The law was enacted as an extreme reaction to 9/11. Many politicians have since stated publicly that this law is not effective in its goal of "fighting terrorism". But as a result of this law, 300,000 people have already lost their licenses or will lose their licenses in the next two years.) And the Latino people asked us to stand beside them in their efforts to overturn this law. The reason that only a few Latino names appear in the ad is due to the climate of fear that has deepened dramatically in the months that we have worked on this project. Only documented people felt safe placing their names in the ad.

Preaching as a Vehicle for Transformation

Another dimension in this road to advocacy is the preaching that led up to it. As

in all parishes, Sunday morning is the time when the largest number of church members gather at one time. In this chapter I will examine the sermons I preached on the two Sundays leading to the signing of "A Call for Compassion." I will examine these sermons through three lenses. One, using Robert Kegan's "model of the development of the self," I will demonstrate how I attempted to engage people who are on different orders of consciousness. The second lens is the "prophetic imagination" of theologian Walter Brueggemann. I intentionally used his insights into prophetic preaching in developing these sermons and will demonstrate the points of contact. This combination of invitation to personal transformation and prophetic imagination contributed to an important initial step in one church's journey to advocacy. But there is an important third lens – that is the "models theology" articulated in Chapter Two. A theologian of church dynamics, Israel Galindo reminds us:

> Models dictate the manner in which a congregation will go about engaging in its critical mission and functions, like worship, religious education, outreach, fellowship, and witness…The institutionalization of the religious dimensions informs everything from *what and how sermons are delivered* (italics mine), how members welcome strangers, how communal relationships work, to the form that ritual and liturgy take. In other words, congregational models are important to understand because they are one primary factor in how congregations decide on who they are and what they do.[62]

To move toward advocacy, we need a healthy interplay of all five models described in Chapter Two. These sermons will attempt to draw on the strength of each model.

Before looking at the sermons themselves, it is necessary to place them in their liturgical seasonal context. The sermons were proclaimed on the fourth and sixth Sundays

of the Easter Season. Throughout this season the preaching and ministry stressed the power of Easter with a particular emphasis on the biblical injunction "be not afraid." We replaced the "Prayers of the People" from The Book of Common Prayer with petitions centering on God's action in the world. Each petition ended with the words "we remind each other..." and the response "be not afraid."

As such, these two sermons were consistent with the themes of the Risen Christ bringing new life to all of us and meeting us in our fears.

I developed these sermons keeping in mind what Brueggemann said about transformation and advocacy. First, transformation:

> We now know (or think we know) that human transformation (the way people change) does not happen through didacticism or through excessive certitude that may subvert the old given text and its interpretation and lead to the embrace of an alternative text and its redescription of reality. Very few people make important changes in their description of the world abruptly. Most of us linger in wistfulness, notice dissonance between our experience and the old text, and wonder if there is a dimension to it all that has been missed. Most of us will not quickly embrace an alternative that is given us in a coercive way. Such coercion more likely makes us defend the old and, in general, become defensive.[63]

This same non-judgmental approach also serves the mission of advocacy. Brueggeman describes the communities of today as "decentered" (a topic I will treat in great detail in my second sermon). How a preacher approaches a decentered community (also called "exilic" in Brueggemann's theology) is like this:

> On the one hand, rhetoric concerning the decentered is *testimony*, that is, an advocacy of a very odd truth, a truth that is off-centered and in deep tension with dominant, commonly accepted givens. Such testimony is advocacy, proposed to dispute with and be in conflict with other advocacies. But it is not utterance that is given as a large universal claim. It is rather a local claim made here and now, in

these circumstances and with passions that pertain to this circumstance. On the other hand, rhetoric among the decentered not only has a different intention, that is, to propose a countertruth that subverts but also a different style of articulation. It is not expressively solemn or rationalistic or final or given with too much sobriety. Rather it is an utterance that is playful, open, teasing, inviting, and capable of voicing the kind of unsure tentativeness and ambiguity that exiles must always entertain, if they are to maintain freedom of imagination outside of the hegemony.[64]

I will now look at the texts of the sermons, stopping at points to examine them through the three lenses. The full text of the sermons are in appendixes "C" and "D." This sermon was delivered on May 7, 2006 – the Fourth Sunday of Easter. Note that this sermon was preached on the first Sunday of the month. That means an abbreviated version was preached in both English and Spanish at the monthly bi-lingual family service.

My sermons are usually ten to twelve minutes long. This one will be closer to fifteen. But I promise over the next couple of months I will preach a six minute sermon so it will average out.

Earlier this week I attended the priests' retreat for the Diocese of New York. It was led by Dr. James Forbes, the pastor of Riverside Church. He is a great dynamic preacher. When I grow up I want to be like Dr. Forbes. Sometimes when he preached, he would break into song. I'm going to offer you a summary of one of his sermons, but for your sake I won't sing any part of it.

The text was Luke chapter four in which Jesus comes forward to read in the synagogue for the first time. He is handed the scroll of Isaiah and reads: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And then he sat down.

Dr. Forbes pointed out that Jesus read from Isaiah chapter 61. But there is a line that Jesus left out. Right after the place where Jesus ends, the text reads: "and the day of vengeance of our God." Jesus left that line out and everyone knew it because they were familiar with the scriptures. Jesus is saying something new. He will not be declaring a God of vengeance.

The crowd was furious. They expected the messiah to come with glory and

peace and happiness for them and vengeance for all who had opposed them through the centuries. Jesus makes the crowd even angrier by going on to talk about two healings described in the bible – both healings were done for foreigners. This made the crowd so mad "they got up, drove him out of town, and led him to the brow of a hill on which their town was built, so they might hurl him off the cliff. But he past through the midst of them and went on his way."

In addition to taking the "playful" approach suggested by Brueggemann, I am consciously attempting to engage those in the congregation on orders of consciousness two and four. Those on order two could possibly identify with the need for healing. They are happy Jesus is not bringing a God of vengeance to them and they are pleased Jesus is healing "outsiders" because as of yet, they do not feel part of this community. They are here to have their needs met and this part of the sermon assures them that is possible.

People with an order four consciousness can appreciate what Jesus is doing. He is going beyond his core "constituency" as Massachusetts Representative and social activist Byron Rushing would say it.[65] He is going beyond the core to the margins. Order Four consciousness knows this is the only path to growth, not only for a community but for an individual.

This portion of the sermon is threatening to those of order three consciousness. A sense of belonging is paramount to them. It is possible they are identifying with the synagogue crowd on some level, although that might not be conscious.

As to "models of church", I am preaching out of an "inclusive model" and out of a model of the "living tradition." Jesus acts out of a precedent provided by the prophets in their healings, even if the people have "forgotten" that part of their tradition. Later in the

sermon I will bring up part of our tradition – welcome to the stranger- that we may have forgotten. Now more of the sermon:

> *Forbes tells us this story illustrates the pattern of Jesus' life: from praise to persecution. And as followers of Jesus that will be the pattern for us as well. More about that in a moment. Forbes ended his sermon by telling us about the time his five-year-old grandson heard him preach on Luke Four. The little boy wondered how Jesus got away when he was surrounded by all those angry people at the cliff. Forbes told his grandson he did not know and asked him how he thought Jesus did it. The little boy thought and said, "Jesus just upped and out. He just upped and out." And he will do that later – in the tomb. Jesus will up and out. Hatred cannot hold him down. Death cannot hold him down. And that will be another pattern for us as well.*

The line about "praise to persecution" might cause some anxiety for all. But the story about Forbes' grandson brings it back to a word of comfort for people in all levels of consciousness. Everyone has the possibility of being engaged by "The Word" at this point. And I attempt to continue that engagement in this part:

> *From praise to persecution. I had a slight experience of that a few weeks ago. I participated in a march of solidarity with Latino and Anglo people in Hyde Park. The event was organized by the husband of Holly Moore – the wonderful fourth grade teacher here in Millbrook. We marched in front of a huge banner that read: "Love Casts Out Fear – Not People". A person carrying a cross led the way. At one point I took a turn carrying the cross. I used to carry crosses in marches all the time years ago but this one seemed much heavier than I remember. They must be making the cross out of a different type of wood these days. As we marched along Route 9, the majority of drivers honked their horns in support. Some gave us obscene gestures. One person spit at me. From praise to persecution – that is the pattern of Jesus' life. And that is who we follow.*

This segment was intended to engage those on order of consciousness three. Many people know and admire Holly Moore. The fact that her husband organized the march means it was done by "someone like us." There is a loyalty to Holly. And there is

a loyalty to me. It was not a "political radical" getting spit at. It was their middle-aged, friendly parish priest. And the fact that the majority honked horns in support was reassuring.

This story invokes "the community of justice" model. After the sermon several people asked me to keep them informed as to when other marches are scheduled. Staying with the justice model, I now attempt to say a prophetic word to a "decentered" community:

> *Now for an opportunity to help our neighbors. Following this story you probably think this is going to be about immigration. But it is not. Immigration is a deep and complex issue in our country and people of good will have a vast variety of opinions about it. The president has a position. The Senate is trying to come to a position. The churches have positions on immigration. All have some validity. There is one position that has no validity, in my opinion. That is the bill passed by the House of Representatives that makes all undocumented people felons as well as all that aid them in any way. I join my little voice to that of Roman Catholic bishops and Episcopal bishops who have described that bill as evil, cruel, and sinful.*

For most of that paragraph I attempted to stay true to Brueggemann's claim: "A great new reality for preaching is pluralism in the interpreting community of the local congregation...Preaching thus must be conducted in a context where one makes proposal and advocacies, not conclusions."[66] I chose, however, to make an "absolute claim" regarding the House bill. Some measures are so extreme they must be addressed directly. Brueggemann agrees but sees another way:

> Prophetic ministry seeks to penetrate the numbness in order to face the body of death in which we are caught. Clearly, the numbness sometimes evokes from us rage and anger, but the numbness is more likely to be penetrated by grief and lament. Death, and that is our state, does not require indignation as much as it requires anguish and the sharing in the pain. The public sharing of pain is one way

to let the reality sink in and the death go.[67]

I decided the numbness to the House bill needed to be met with anger and indignation. I return to Brueggemann's path of "anguish" when I describe to the parish the suffering imposed on the Latino community by this law. I ask them to imagine what it would be like to live here without a drivers' license. But before that I say:

> *There are many opinions about immigration right here at Grace Church. Remember we are not the Body of Christ because we agree with each other – we are the Body of Christ because we care about each other.*

That is a blatant appeal to orders of consciousness two and three. You are cared for here ("two"). You belong here ("three"). And then I go into the text of the ad, noting it was not being paid from church funds, but from a private donation. I make it clear that not all would be moved to sign it and that is ok. I also encourage people to continue the dialog at coffee hour. I make an appeal from scripture that directed all of us to order of consciousness five when I quote Leviticus: *"If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself – for once you were strangers in Egypt."* In order five consciousness we engage the "other" as another dimension of our own complex selves. The "other" brings out another dimension of myself.

This encouragement to stay together in compassion draws on the inclusive community model and on that of the emergent church. The emergent church, with its emphasis on post-modern consciousness, understands well the insights around a decentered community offered by Brueggemann. (In crediting the emergent model for the

basis of this part of the sermon, I do so noting that an emergent church probably would not have a sermon at all. That would have a reflection, a question, and a discussion.)

The sermon is not over yet. I told them it would be long. After a brief description of the Good Shepherd (the assigned text for the day) I describe sheep as "smart" because they would not be driven from behind. They would only move when the leader went first, showing them the path ahead was safe.

> *Jesus, the Good Shepherd, will "up and out" from the tomb to resurrection, and we will follow. With Jesus leading the way, there is nothing to be afraid of. Not even death.*
>
> *The early church understood this. A key moment for the church came in Rome around 120 A.D. The church was growing but was still a minority. The plague struck Rome. Even in those days people understood what "contagious" meant. When pagans contracted the disease, their families and friends put them into the street to die. Christians, however, because they were unafraid of death, would care for their diseased loved ones. They would nurture the sick, knowing they were risking infection themselves.*
>
> *When the plague receded from Rome, it was noticed that far more of the infected Christians lived through it than the infected pagans. They lived because they had been cared for. More and more pagans began to inquire about this new religion called "The Way".*
>
> *The Way of Jesus can change the world. He has gone first and showed us how to do it. May we follow and in so doing "up and out" to a New Life. Do not be afraid. Amen.*

Here I am appealing to orders two and three as I stress belonging. The Church is seen as that place where people are cared for. People in orders of consciousness two and three would like to be part of that early church. And they are comforted in knowing they walk a path that has already been walked. The personal connection to Jesus as we go on our own journey is energizing and hopeful. At the same time, I am attempting to bring out the necessary social consequences of a life lived in faith. There is no need to make

explicit the parallel between early Christians caring for the sick and thereby risking death and 21st century Christians standing with undocumented people in their need and risking political alienation from the majority party and government of our time. Hopefully the story itself creates the opening for the hearers of it to make that connection.

There are several models interacting here. The emergent church encourages us to be open to what is new and what new needs are placed before us. The inclusive community welcomes all. And once again a story of our heritage is being brought forth and made part of the living tradition.

Community Reaction to the First Sermon

The coffee hours that day (we have one after each of the three services) were animated. Some people readily signed "A Call for Compassion". Some did so after deep conversation. Some disagreed strongly – either because of their position on the issue or because they felt the church should not be involved in politics. I feel very badly about a parishioner who did not come to coffee hour (and he normally does). On the way out of church he grabbed my hand and held it very tightly while speaking with tremendous emotion: "I risked my life for this country in Vietnam. The people here are to abide by the laws of the land. If you are going to have this ad, you must have another ad saying we the people of Grace Church support the law." He then let go of my hand and left, despite my efforts to continue the conversation. I called him that afternoon and left a message for him. I emailed him. A few months later he returned to church and never mentioned the cause of his departure. I need to do further analysis as to how I could have presented this

in a way that engaged him and not alienated him.

One parishioner who is firmly in the "community of justice" model spoke to me after the early service. He has been passionately committed to Latino ministry right from the start and has given very generously of time, talent and treasure to the effort. Overall he liked the sermon, but said "you sounded defensive. You could have been stronger." I quickly did an inner analysis and realized why that was true. The night before we had a fund-raising concert for the church. It was performed for free by a parishioner who has had a long and successful career in rock music – John Hall (formerly of the band *Orleans*.) John is a social activist and running for the Democratic nomination for Congress. (He later won the nomination and the election.) Although this was not to be a campaign event for him, many of his statements and songs were about social activism. At the end of the concert, I publicly thanked him for his "prophetic voice." In the lobby afterwards I met several angry people who did not agree with his politics. And they had just spent all this money to support Grace Church! Their anger impacted me and I had a sleepless night. I'm sure that took the prophetic edge off my first delivery of the sermon. I took my friend's insight to heart and attempted to say the truth in love in the next two sermons.

The Latino community at the 9 a.m. family service reacted with gratitude expressed in a quiet, polite way. At our Friday night meetings, they express their opinions clearly and forcefully. (At least the men do.) But whenever they are together with the Anglo community, they are quiet and reserved. On this day, Latino families were the hosts for the coffee hour following the 9 a.m. service. That was intentional planning on

my part and served as a symbol of their involvement in our community.

The fact that most people did engage in conversation leads to development of spiritual community. Brueggemann makes the connection to the preached word:

> The preaching task is to guide people out of the alienated silence of the exaggerated self, and out of the silence of denial and rage of an exaggerated God, into a serious, dangerous, subversive, covenantal conversation, a conversation that is the root form of communion. Communion is not possible where speech is destroyed either by selfishness or by submissiveness. In the midst of these reductions, the preacher is invited to speak in ways that open a world of conversation, communication, and communion.[68]

Analysis of the Second Sermon and Reaction

Those on-going conversations served as an impetus to my next sermon on this topic on May 21, the 6th Sunday in the Easter Season. (I did not address this issue on the 5th Sunday because it was Mother's Day and the tone needed to fit the expectations of the congregation of that day – a congregation that included many mothers visiting from out-of-town.)

The sermon relies on the display of four posters with numerous crisscrossing lines representing political opinions. (These charts are included in appendices E, F, G. H). I begin the sermon referring to conversation and community:

> *For the past couple of weeks there has been a lively and healthy discussion going on among Grace Church members regarding the New York State law that requires a social security number to obtain a driver's license. It leads me to reflect on how complex the political landscape is here. To understand exactly how complex it is, I invite you to consider a series of charts I have drawn up.*
>
> (Holds up first chart.) *Here is how this chart works. I chose five random parishioners who have expressed to me their opinions on a variety of political issues. I will not reveal their names. I chose four "hot button" political issues: the war in Iraq, the school budget, gay rights in the church, the gas crisis. Then I drew lines from the "person" to where they stand on that issue. So person "A"*

here supports the war in Iraq, votes for the school budget, opposes the blessing of gay unions and the election of Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, and thinks there should be windfall taxes imposed on the oil companies. Person "B" opposes the war in Iraq, supports gay rights within the church, but agrees with Person "A" in voting for the school budget and calling for restraints on the oil companies. Person "C" agrees with Person "B" in opposing the war, and agrees with Person "B" in supporting gay rights, but votes against the school budget and believes gas prices should be as high as they are because that is the real cost of what we are doing to the environment. Person "D" supports the war, votes against the school budget, supports gay rights, and thinks nothing should be done about gas prices. Look at all these crisscrossing lines. Person "E" makes it even more complex.

After the first few lines of this sermon, I felt a genuine tension in the church. Perhaps some were thinking "here he goes again – preaching about politics." Others might have felt that while the conversations on this topic were healthy, they were not pleasant. They might have been hoping for a relaxed coffee hour that was not too deep. But the further I went into the description of the chart, the more I felt the congregation loosening up. There was a playfulness about it all, as I attempted to fulfill Brueggemann's insight:

> Among exiles, it is not necessary or even preferable to engage in *monolithic* language, that is, language that is one-dimensional, excessively flat, too sure, too serious, with too much closure. Monolithic language that smacks of closure is too much an echo of the rhetoric of the empire, precisely what is to be gotten away from. Whereas the empire needs certitude, exiles need space, room for maneuver, breathing opportunities that allow for negotiation, adjudication, ambiguity, and playfulness.[69]

For the next few minutes I keep replacing each chart with a more complex one. The second chart shows arrows crisscrossing where people who seem to agree on an issue have disagreements. For example, a person who supported the war in Iraq at first, now thinks we should get out. Another person who disagreed with our initial entry into that

country, feels we have no choice now but to stay. A person who voted against the school budget will vote for a compromise budget, but another person will vote against that as well. In the third chart I take those same five people with the four political issues and add other issues: immigration, abortion rights, Darfur, capital punishment, the environment. I tell the congregation this chart is beginning to look like a Jackson Pollock painting. Now I take out the last chart:

> *That's just five people. We have 500 people on our parish rolls. I know, I know – where are they? Come here on Christmas Eve and I will introduce you. If we take into account their opinions on all these issues, our chart looks like this.* (Holds up chart with hundreds of intersecting lines.) *That's my parish and I love them all.*

Now the congregation is roaring in laughter. But beneath the laughter is a great sense of relief. Brueggemann tells us why:

> All but the most closed and sheltered liturgic congregations are indomitably heterogeneous. That emerging pluralism, moreover, cannot any longer be overcome by absolute assertion. For such absolute assertion, whether by strong pastoral authority or by denominational dictum, can only serve to excommunicate those who see and take and experience reality otherwise. The more frantic our zeal to maintain the oneness and wholeness of "our truth," the more divisive such practice becomes.[70]

In this sermon I am most aware that most church-going people are "3"s on the order of consciousness. I am telling them that disagreement is ok. Their loyalty can remain intact even while we engage and embrace "the other." They will not be "excommunicated" and hopefully they will not "excommunicate" themselves by leaving for a less diverse community.

Obviously the model I am working from is inclusive community with an emergent

post-modernism sensitivity. I pointed out in Chapter Two that of the five models of church, Grace Church is most in the "spiritual pilgrims" model where pastoral care and the individual spiritual journey is very important. In the next segment of the sermon I draw upon this dimension of my community:

> *The two most important things a priest does are pastoral care and preaching. Two pastoral care stories for you. One time back at West Point, I'm jogging when Mike, an army major and a member of my parish, runs up with several cadets and asks if I want to join them. I foolishly say "yes" – these guys don't jog, they run. As we start out, Mike says "Gentlemen, this is Father Doug Fisher. He is our Episcopal chaplain." And then, in his most exaggerated Texas drawl, Mike says: "He is one of them progressives. But we love him anyway."*
>
> *We were together at West Point for a few years and then Mike retired from the Army and moved to New Mexico. We kept up, talking on the phone every few weeks. Mike vehemently opposed the invasion of Iraq. And he strongly opposed the election of Gene Robinson and the blessing of gay unions. Mike and I both love the Episcopal Church but we are on opposite sides of the gay rights issue. One time we were talking about this and Mike got so angry he hung up on me.*
>
> *Within minutes he called back. He said, "Doug, you were there for me in the darkest hour of my life. And in the second, third, fourth and fifth darkest hours of my life. We will probably always disagree on gay rights but you will always be my friend and my priest."*
>
> *Another time at Grace I was bringing communion to a parishioner who was ill. He is just the opposite of Mike. He supports gay rights and he supports the war. We prayed together, we laughed, we spoke of deep things. And then he said, "Doug, we are never going to let a war come between us." He is absolutely right. We are not the Body of Christ because we agree with each other; we are the Body of Christ because we care about each other.*

Now the "two's" know they will have their needs met in this community. And the "three's" know they will always belong. It is time to move back to Brueggmann's call to refrain from "absolute assertions":

> *My other most important role here is preaching. I love preaching but there are two things that make it a challenge. One is a statement I carry around in my head that one of my sisters-in-law said. Speaking about preachers, she offered*

this profound advice: "Live like Gandhi or shut up!" Since I do not live like Gandhi, when I preach I do so with huge doses of justified humility. I sincerely pray that the inconsistencies in my life do not get in the way of Jesus' saving message.

By now everyone in our "decentered community" should be feeling at home, including the preacher, now that I have located myself within that community. Now is the time to move toward advocacy:

And it is a challenge to preach because the gospel causes conflict in a complex world. But a fear of conflict must not paralyze us. Come with me for a moment back to 1860. The Episcopal Church is having its triennial General Convention. Think about what was going on in the United States in 1860, the eve of the Civil War. The Convention passed numerous resolutions but did not say one thing about slavery! The bishops and the deputies were afraid it would cause conflict.

I am attempting here to use history to reimagine the present situation. The way I use history, Brueggemann uses the Bible in the context of preaching and imagination:

> Such preaching does not aim at immediate outcomes but over time intends, detail by detail, to make a different world available in which different acts, attitudes, and policies are seen to be appropriate. To aim at this "underneath" dimension of faith is consistent with Ricoeur's conclusion that the "symbol gives rise to new thought." I would paraphrase Ricoeur to say that "the image gives rise to a new world of possibility": preaching as understood here aims at images arising out of the text that may give rise to a church of new obedience.[71]

The "new obedience" to which this sermon invites the congregation is the demands of love. In the last minutes of this sermon, I tell people that conflict followed Jesus constantly. And I quote Garry Wills from his book What Jesus Meant: "Jesus subscribed to no political program. He was far more radical than that...Heaven's reign makes deeper and broader demands, the demands not only of justice but of love."[72] I

then bring that to our local situation and the controversy of our advocacy:

> *What is love demanding of us? That's what makes the kingdom of God different from all other kingdoms. We must consider what is right, what is logical, what is good, what is just, what is fair. But then as followers of Jesus we must ask "what is love demanding of us?" In many cases there will not be an obvious answer to that question. We need to wrestle with the questions and we may get different answers. Look at that chart. But we may never run from that question: "what does love demand from us in this situation, in this time and place?"*

At coffee hour, there was one more opportunity to sign "A Call for Compassion" before it went to the newspaper. Even more people signed up than had the two weeks before. There was a "lighter" atmosphere in the parking lot and in the parish hall. Many people did not sign the ad, but I did not get a sense they felt guilty about it or alienated. I do think there was an opening for further dialog.

The Preacher's Experience

Those who developed the *Social Justice Continuum* say the leap from charity and service to advocacy is the most difficult transition. This preacher experiences that difficulty. I weighed my words more carefully than ever before. I drew on more resources than ever before.

The person who worked most closely with me on the development of the text for "A Call to Compassion," a parishioner and friend named Walter Cadette, is also the person who translates my sermons into Spanish. This meant he had a copy of the first sermon before I delivered it. When he read it, he commented "I hope you have your resume' ready." He said it in jest, but it conveyed the risk we were all taking in this movement of a parish to advocacy.

In this attempt at prophetic preaching, I am sustained in several ways. One is the informal "community of justice" that I belong to. My wife, Betsy, believes in what we are doing and she encourages me when I waver. The Rev. Richard Witt, director of *Rural and Migrant Ministry*, is a constant source of support and inspiration. And the people in the community that has developed around Latino ministry are an encouraging resource of hope.

I am sustained by the witness and Spirit of Jesus. It is Brueggemann's description of Jesus in his world 2000 years ago that says so much to me in our world now: "The contrast is stark and total: this passionate man set in the midst of numbed Jerusalem. And only the passion can finally penetrate the numbness."[73]

And finally I am aware of entering a path of transformation as I do this work. Whenever I get stalled along the way in my developing consciousness, it is the challenge and hope of advocacy that gets me moving again. It is in the "outer journey" (to use the language of Richard Rohr) that my "inner journey" is engaged and made real.

CHAPTER FOUR- TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The numerous books written on the topic of leadership, and my own experience, say leadership is an art, not a science. One definition is that of Ronald Heifetz in Leadership Without Easy Answers: "leadership is mobilizing others to tackle tough

problems that will benefit the common good."[74] Transformational leadership is multi-dimensional, creative, dynamic. Although this chapter will be held together by the intersecting themes of advocacy and the personal development theory of Robert Kegan set within the context of parish life, it will not be linear and it will not be complete.

A View from the Balcony: The Pace of Change

Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linksy of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University write:

> Few practical ideas are more obvious or more critical than the need to get perspective in the midst of action. Any military officer, for example, knows the importance of maintaining the capacity for reflection, even in the "fog of war"... Jesuits call it "contemplation in action." Hindus and Buddhists call it "karma yoga", or mindfulness. We call this skill "getting off the dance floor and going back to the balcony," an image that captures the mental activity of stepping back in the midst of action and asking, "What's really going on here?"[75]

Here are a few things I have seen from the balcony as Grace Church has embraced Latino ministry and moved toward advocacy.

With an appreciation of my many "order of consciousness three" people, I have carefully monitored the pace of change. Heifetz stresses that a leader needs to "regulate the distress" for the group and that means learning to pace the rate of pushing for change to what the group can manage lest they get overwhelmed.[76] The *Creativity, Change and Conflict* course taught at EDS had a story in which a man wanted to raise his house. His guide told him how to do it, a time-consuming process in which he raised the house a few inches at a time, then let it set for a few days, then raised it again another inch or two. This went on for weeks until the house was finally in the position he needed it. He asked

the guide why he could not have done it all at once. The wise consultant said, "Because if you did it all at once you would have blown out all the doors and windows."[77]

Transformation in the parish is not easy and it is time consuming. Too much too soon will blow out all the windows and doors. As a leader I needed to monitor this process regarding advocacy in three ways:

1. Timing. I have been preaching about justice and advocacy for a long time before we ever took out the ad "A Call for Compassion." In terms of overall Latino outreach, we built it over the course of a year in this deliberate fashion:

-June, 2005. We hire, with a private donation, Carlos Orellana, a community organizer, who starts meeting and gathering people.

-July, 2005. Friday night meetings with Latino people. Numbers grow to forty every week. A growing number of Anglo people attend as well.

-September, 2005. Grace Church hosts a fiesta for Mexican Independence Day. 120 people celebrate.

-October, 2005. First bi-lingual service. It is so successful we schedule it for the first Sunday of every month. Also in October, twice weekly ESL classes start and continue as a permanent ministry. And we arrange for M@T Bank to provide bank accounts for undocumented people.

-December, 2005. First liturgy entirely in Spanish is celebrated for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This is followed by a fiesta.

-February, 2006. Meetings begin to plan "A Call for Compassion."

-May, 2006. "A Call to Compassion" is offered to the parish for their signatures. Published on May, 24.

-June, 2006. A "job network" is begun by a Union Theological seminarian who received grant money from the Jonathan Daniels Foundation of EDS. The job network invites all job seekers and employers to participate.

2. Context of Overall Ministry. If Latino ministry was our only new initiative it

might have received negative feedback from people who felt neglected or believed the whole structure of the parish was shifting. To counteract that we kept all the traditional ministries going, strengthened the pastoral care teams, hired a new organist/choir director who dramatically improved the liturgical music, and started an outreach to our college students with a "care package" ministry. A much-needed preschool started in September, 2006 and we began experimental "emergent" liturgies. In this way, the focus was not all on Latino ministry. The house was being moved without the windows and doors being blown out.

Our attempt to keep everything going as it had in the past was not entirely successful. Youth Ministry, which I frequently described as "the best in the Diocese of New York", slid noticeably. Despite having two part-time paid youth ministers, and the largest confirmation class in the history of Grace Church (twenty-seven 7th graders) and the numerous high school students who were involved in previous years, the energy was not there. Many programs were cancelled or poorly attended. There were some highlights, but not as many as in the past. I did not pay as much attention to it as I had, and if that is one reason the Youth Ministry is falling off, then the church is still too centered on the rector. (Youth Ministry revived a year later.)

3. Teamwork. Heifetz and Linsky warn: "Marginalization can happen to anybody, including those on top. Authority figures can be sidelined, particularly when they allow themselves to become so identified with an issue that they become the issue."[78] They give the example of Lyndon Johnson who did so much good with his Great Society programs but became so personally identified with the Vietnam War that its failure meant

his failure. Grace Church would not move toward advocacy if they saw Latino ministry as just my cause and if they saw it as my only cause the very structure of the parish could be jeopardized. Fortunately, many people have embraced it with an enthusiasm that matches or exceeds mine. And there was some synchronicity at work. Two new Grace Church members, Jack Banning and Walter Cadette, met at a "Men at Grace" dinner. Engaged in conversation they realized they were in the same class of the U.S. Diplomatic Corp forty years ago. Both are fluent in Spanish and committed to social justice. Latino ministry could not have happened without their generosity of time, talent and treasure.

More Views from the Balcony

"A view from the balcony" includes being politically astute. A way to understand some of the class consciousness that is part of Grace Church is seen through the basketball/hockey disparity. Basketball is played by the middle and lower classes. The first time I realized Mexican people lived in Millbrook was when I played in an adult basketball league and one team was entirely Mexican. Every time we played them the stands were filled with Mexican women and children. (A sad sidenote: Mexicans basketball players would frequently gather on summer evenings at the outdoor court on the grounds of a public school. Village officials have now locked the gates at night, citing safety concerns. Could unlocking those gates be the next advocacy action for us?)

Hockey is played by the upper classes. The equipment is expensive and so is the rental of ice rinks. In the 1990's when the Grace Church membership was decidedly upper class, so many children and youth played hockey on Sunday mornings that the

family service was near empty from November through March. The rector frequently preached about Sunday morning priorities and hockey but without success. When I arrived at Grace Church, people warned me this would happen. But the parish has shifted so dramatically from a private school demographic to a public school demographic that hockey season has no effect on church attendance.

Here is how I used this knowledge in my "view from the balcony." Many of the old-time hockey families who still participate somewhat at Grace resist Latino ministry. They generally do not do this overtly but with a resounding silence. I know, too, that they have an "awe" of those individuals at Grace who are very wealthy. When we signed people up for "A Call for Compassion" I intentionally pursued the very wealthy. I knew their names on the ad would carry great credibility for the hockey families. All of the "very wealthy" signed. None of the hockey families did because they are so rarely in church any more, hockey season or not. But when they see the ad, with those names, I hope they will stay within the church instead of silently leaving. I hope they will stay in dialog. Staying in dialog is the only way we can respect and meet the needs of our "two's" and "three's", while keeping the possibility of personal transformation through advocacy.

There is another "view from the balcony" that focuses on respect for each person's journey of transformation. I have frequently held up to the congregation the story of the 18th century Quaker, John Woolman. At a meeting in 1740, Woolman received a word from God saying slavery was wrong and should be abolished. Woolman proclaimed this word and urged all in the congregation to give up their slaves. Those at

the meeting listened respectfully but disagreed. Many of them owned slaves and that arrangement was working just fine for them. They would not give up their slaves but they did agree that John Woolman should go further in seeing if this truly was God's will. The community agreed to work his farm for him, support his wife and children, while he would preach his message to other Quaker communities and they would await the results. Woolman went out and preached up and down the east coast for twenty years. At the end of that time, all Quakers, including his original community, set free their slaves. This is one hundred years before the Emancipation Proclamation.[79]

The community could not immediately respond to the challenge but they were open to a new revelation and they were willing to sacrifice so that revelation could be explored. Not everyone at Grace Church thinks we should be involved in Latino ministry or advocacy. But they are willing to let us explore this possibility. Even if they can't "go there" themselves at this time, they respect and support those that do. That unto itself allows an openness to God's future and the possibility of personal transformation. Theologian Amy Plantinga Pauw affirms this insight using forgiveness as an example:

> The communal character of practice can nourish the beliefs of individuals even when they find themselves incapable of participating in the practice directly. They may find their belief in the power and reality of God's forgiveness strengthened by the practice of others, even as they continue to fail miserably in practicing forgiveness themselves. Likewise, their belief in the power of forgiveness can shape the practice of a community, even when their own practice falters. My beliefs shape more than my individual practice alone.[80]

The Quaker community of John Woolman and the theology of Pauw again affirm the possibility for transformation that occurs when loyal "threes" stay within a community attempting social change.

The "view from the balcony" allows me to see now that we have taken this dramatic public step for advocacy in the publication of "A Call for Compassion" we can go about the hard work of day to day advocacy. We have made our statement and now we live it out with an openness to God's future. For this insight I am drawing on the inspiration of Martin Luther King, Jr.

> Martin Luther King,Jr. provides an example of the gambles of provocation. In the early days of the civil rights movement, without the authority to require the nation to address racial injustice, he engaged extensively in demonstrations and nonviolent civil disobedience. Although he did not know for certain that there would be violence along the way, he knew that if he kept it up long enough there would be trouble. All King could do was make sure that if violence did occur, the media would be there. When Sheriff Bull Connor brought out the attack dogs, King had a national audience. Once he had the people's attention, King did not have to be so provocative. He began to have moral authority, and as his authority grew, he had a wider spectrum of attention-getting devices at his disposal. In 1963 it was numbers, not violence, that focused the nation on civil rights, when 240,000 marched with him in Washington, D.C., and heard him say, "I have a dream."[81]

Now that we have Millbrook's attention, other avenues for advocacy may open up.

A "view from the balcony" also means attention to detail in an emotionally sensitive time in our church. I made sure, very sure, that the parish hall was thoroughly cleaned up after the two Saturday night fiestas. If those coming to coffee hour on Sunday morning walked into a parish hall even slightly in disarray, our mission would have been derailed for want of a broom.

The final "view from the balcony" is appreciation of the vision of Byron Rushing, Massachusetts state senator and a dynamic leader in the Episcopal Church. He says

transformation can happen when one takes on a cause that cannot be resolved in our lifetime. Take on something so important that no one person or community can make it happen. Take on something so big that it is only by being part of a bigger movement through history that it can be achieved. And then have "revolutionary patience" as it unfolds.[82] I believe we have taken on that type of cause at Grace Church. And we ground our hope in Martin Luther King's claim: "I am convinced we shall overcome because the arc of the universe is long but it bends toward justice."[83]

Leadership in Multi-Cultural Competency

We are making an on-going effort to educate ourselves to become multi-culturally competent people. We are using the framework laid out in A House of Prayer For All Peoples.

1. "Know the difference between race, ethnicity, and culture; that culture is more than race and ethnicity, and be able to apply this knowledge within theological contexts."[84] Our Latino people are not a homogeneous group. We need to appreciate their individual journeys. This becomes an even greater opportunity since our ESL classes have begun to draw beyond the Latino community. We have a man from China and a family from Albania. And they are attending church as well. This might not be significant in an urban church, but here in the country it is.

2. "Get in touch with prejudice and stereotypes."[85] "Get a Mexican to do it" is a common phrase in Millbrook. As we grow beyond that stereotype, others are revealed. To their credit, Mexican people have a reputation as hard workers. This is said frequently.

But is the foundation of their worth in their work? Is that the basis for our care? Do we only value Anglos who work hard? What happens when we encounter a Mexican that does not work hard, in our judgment?

3. "Challenge the myth of color blindness, and be aware of the reality of color consciousness as it pertains to race and theological institutions."[86] This is a major hurdle among people who feel they have already moved beyond racism because we have moved beyond it in our minds.

4. "Understand that race, ethnicity, gender, economics, class, sexual identity, ability, age, religion and so on are organizing principles for good or ill in everything they do."[87] This is a very difficult task for those of whom the systems, as they are, work very well.

5. "Recognize that there are multiple centers of truth, whose legitimacy is often determined by the amount of power any given perspective may have in a particular context."[88] This is one area of development where the people of Grace have a head start although we have a long way to go in truly understanding the power dimension. Consistently I have preached, and people have responded, to the philosophical truism "reality is multiple and superabundant." We talk about such theological realities as being "born again" as only one way of entering the Reign of God. But there are others according to Jesus. Such as becoming like a little child. Or giving away possessions. Or caring for a person beaten and abused by life. We "get" there are multiple centers of truth. The power dimension needs exploration, a lot of exploration.

Some of this work is done by lifting up the stories of real people. This story

appeared in *Grace Notes*, the monthly newsletter that goes to all our members:

> Hello, my name is Leticia. When I was eight my family left Guanajuato, Mexico to come to the United States. The coyote took us in a van with blacked out windows. We lived in the van for three days eating nothing but mayonnaise sandwiches. We gradually made it to New York...My dad got a job where the farmer only wanted single men. My mom, two brothers and I lived in my dad's trailer on the farm for three months in secret. When the owner found out, he fired my dad and evicted us...My mom worked in a sweatshop, sewing pantyhose and T-shirts for piece rate. When I turned 13, I started working forty hours a week there too...I became involved with the Youth Arts Group of Rural and Migrant Ministry. I learned a lot of leadership skills, including public speaking...RMM created a leadership institute to help me, and kids like me, to try to go to college. Would the people at Grace Church join me in campaigning to get legislation that will allow non-documented youth to apply for state loans and grants and allow migrant youth to claim New York State residency to get the lower tuition for SUNY schools?[89]

Relating to people of another culture and hearing their stories can provoke personal transformation if engaged from a daring place in the soul. Robert Egan, S.J., quoted by Janet Ruffing in Mysticism and Social Transormation explores the challenging possibility:

> (Consider) the point of view of someone who is other, who is from somewhere else, and who, in a related way, reveals something of God's radical otherness when the stranger breaks into one's world. For an experience of such otherness to facilitate insight, a person has to be willing to relate to the stranger in such a way that he or she can get some sense of what life is like seen and lived from a completely different social location. It can be quite a shock to cross over the threshold, emphatically, into the world of the other.[90]

As the leader of this community, I need to look vigilantly for ways to create opportunities for education in multiculturalism. And I need to explore how that education can be provided for the Latino community as well.

Vestry Leadership: A Survey

> The edge to which there is energy is the creative edge where attraction, draw, and longing meet in the longing of the Holy One for participation in the ongoing creation of the realm of God. The edge might emerge out of a feeling that the group can do something better, or it might come from a sense of deep satisfaction in the mission already underway. A community must have energy to engage in its mission.[91]

To determine the "edge to which there is energy" at Grace, I invited the vestry to fill out a questionnaire that I adapted from the "Parish Profile Inventory"[92] developed by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research at Hartford Seminary. The vestry answered this questionnaire for the first time at the July, 2005 meeting. I invited them to answer the same questionnaire at our May 21, 2006 meeting. This represents the time-frame in which we became involved in Latino ministry in a deeper and deeper way and became involved in advocacy. The complete results of the survey are seen in Appendix I. Here is a summary of the results. Note that there are fifteen vestry members and there was a turnover of three between the two questionnaires. Note too that this survey would be of greater value if it had been conducted with the entire parish. Practical constraints prevented me from this. I believe it still has value here in the chapter on transformative leadership as it indicates the values, opinions and movement of our vestry.

There are three sections to the questionnaire. The first is called "Tasks of the Church". To each of seventeen questions, the vestry was asked to respond with one of the following: "needs more emphasis," "very satisfied," "generally satisfied," "receives too much emphasis."

The two questions concerning worship received all "very satisfied" or "generally

satisfied" both years with little change. The two questions regarding education (one for children and one for adults) received almost all "very satisfied" both years. All vestry members gave "helping members deepen their personal, spiritual relationship with God" a "very satisfied" both years. "Sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched" got mostly "needs more emphasis" the first year and mostly "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied" the second year. People told me they answered in that way because they saw the Latino population as "unchurched" since they did not attend church in the United States until they came to Grace.

Both years the vestry rated the church very highly in response to these items:

-providing a caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins, and bereaved

-providing pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems

-providing fellowship opportunities

-helping members understand their use of money, time, and talent as expressions of Christian stewardship

-helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service

-supporting the global mission of the denomination

An area in which the church consistently scored "needs more emphasis" was "participating in activities and programs with other local religious groups." There is a history of tension with the Roman church in town because some of their members have switched to Grace. This "chill" has an effect on all interchurch cooperation in our small town.

The answers to this questionnaire demonstrate our movement in the *Social Justice*

Continuum did not come at the cost of our traditional ministries. Here are the answers to the questions that touch upon the *Continuum*:

"Engaging in acts of charity and service to persons in need" in 2005 received eight votes for "generally satisfied," five votes for "very satisfied," and two votes for "needs more emphasis." Our main charity and service activities at that time included monthly food preparation and the serving of meals for the poor at the Lunch Box in the nearby city of Poughkeepsie, generous contributions of time, talent and treasure to the Rural and Migrant Ministry, various sporadic collections for charities such as Episcopal Charities of New York and Episcopal Relief and Development, and money I give out from my discretionary fund. In 2006, after our involvement in Latino ministry (and a trip to Mississippi helping Katrina victims) the results to this question were: eleven votes for "very satisfied," three votes for "generally satisfied," and one vote for "needs more emphasis." This indicates some progression on the charity and service end of the *Continuum*.

"Encouraging members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political and economic issues" is the next question. In 2005 there were ten votes for "very satisfied," four votes for "generally satisfied" and one vote for "needs more emphasis." This shifted in 2006 to thirteen votes for "very satisfied," two votes for "generally satisfied" and one vote for "receives too much emphasis."

The last item that applies to the *Continuum* is "Advocating on behalf of the oppressed." In 2005 three people were "very satisfied," ten were "generally satisfied" and two said "needs more emphasis." The response in 2006 was remarkably different. 13

people said "very satisfied" and two said "needs more emphasis."

I believe this very unscientific survey affirms there is a new "edge to which there is energy" at Grace. The next part of the survey concerns "organizational characteristics" in which people were invited to check off "strong," "moderate," "slight" or "disagree" for each item. Of these fifteen questions, five have particular value for this thesis project. They are:

"Members and groups get a lot of support and encouragement for trying something new in the congregation." Both years this received almost a 100% "strong" vote.

"The theological and biblical implications of important decisions are regularly discussed." Again the vote is consistently for "strong." This *might* indicate the connection is being made between the scriptural call for mercy, reconciliation and justice and our decisions at Grace.

"Important decisions about the life of the church are rarely made without open discussion by church leaders and members." Both years the most votes were for "moderate" and only a few for "strong." This indicates a growing edge for me. I need to be more consultative. Note the Lyndon Johnson story above.

"Disagreements and conflicts are dealt with openly rather than hushed up or hidden behind closed doors." This vote shifted significantly in a year. In 2005 most of the votes were "moderate." In 2006 most of the votes were "strong." This could be because the questionnaire was filled out hours after I gave my sermon with all charts outlining the many and varied political opinions of our membership and inviting us to wrestle with

"what does love demand?"

"The current morale of our church is high." Both years the majority said "strong." In our movement toward advocacy there have been "casualities" but that has not damaged morale. And it may have increased it.

The last segment of the questionnaire is entitled "Congregational Identity." A statement is made on the far left of the page and a contradictory one is on the far right of the page. One can then vote on numbers from one through seven as to what end of the spectrum the church is on. Of the ten questions the following five are of particular interest to this project:

"Our church is very involved with the community around the church." "Our church is not at all involved with the community around the church." The votes were strong for "involvement" in 2005 and even more so in 2006.

"Our church is primarily oriented to serving our members." "Our church is primarily oriented to serving the world beyond our membership." The votes were closer to the middle this time, but 2006 showed a sharp trend toward "serving he world beyond our membership."

"Our congregation feels like one large family." "Our congregation feels like a loosely knit association of individuals and groups." Both years the answers were almost all in the middle. This is my experience as well. I do not believe this is caused by our justice commitments. I think it is caused by having three very different Sunday services and by the huge disparity as to people's involvement in church – from the very involved, to those who come to church once a month, to those we rarely see.

"Our congregation is known as a prestigious one in the area." "Our strengths not withstanding, our church is not considered one of the 'status' churches in the area." I know my vestry took "status" to mean economic status. Almost all the votes were to the right for both years. This would not have been true ten years ago. Now the "status" people go to the Episcopal church seven miles away. In this rural area, we are clearly the "downtown church." But the similarity of the results for 2005 and 2006 indicate we were going in this direction *before* we became involved in Latino ministry and advocacy.

"Our church's approach to social issues is basically educational, leaving action to individual conscience." "Our church's approach to social issues is decidedly activist. We take stands on social issues as a congregation." The vote shifted markedly from "individual conscience" in 2005 toward "activist" in 2006.

Overall, this survey indicates we are moving beyond charity and service on the *Social Justice Continuum* and we are doing it while maintaining what the church has always done well. We still have a long way to go to get to justice but the direction is encouraging. The arc is long but bends towards justice.

More About Vestry Leadership

Advocacy and the movement towards it require creativity, energy, confidence and hope. That spirit needs to run throughout the parish and the vestry is a spark for it. A frustration for me in my many years as a parish priest is what happens at vestry meetings as opposed to what could happen at vestry meetings. I have been blessed by being the rector of churches where the people elected to vestry have been generous, spirited,

intelligent, mature, prayerful and gifted. Put them in a room together and no matter what is on the agenda, the meeting bogs down into an endless discussion of petty details and debate over the heating bill. Individually the vestry is talented. How to tap into that creativity, which is so necessary for justice, is the challenge. The interlocking challenge of personal transformation recognizes that some time-stressed vestry members are there out of loyalty. For "three's," the work of the vestry has little to do with engaging the other for the sake of the fullness of the Body of Christ or discovering another dimension of the self while being open to God's future. It is about making sure the church is ok, functioning well and responsibly, and getting home to many other tasks.

How can the vestry be a vehicle for personal and societal change? To move in that direction, I have implemented some of the insights of Charles Olsen as he describes them in Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders. Olsen is inspirational in his vision of what a vestry could be. He writes:

> The collective board is not to see itself as a coordinating cabinet or an advisory group but as the people of God in community. The group is the Body of Christ, with members having varying gifts, wisdom, and functions. As such the group's life is formed by scripture, prayer, silent waiting, witnessing and serving. Members are on a journey together that may take them on paths to the wilderness, into areas of ambiguity and conflict, or to pleasant meadows of discovery, satisfaction and delight. The meeting will no longer be seen as a gathering of individual people with business to transact, but as the functioning of the Body with all its patterns, disciplines and ministries.[93]

My experience in vestry meetings is that we open with prayer but then shift into "work" mode with no integration of the prayer into the meeting. Olsen offers practical ideas for prayer integration and we have made these ideas part of our practice at Grace with the result being a renewed spirit (most of the time.) These practices include creating

an atmosphere of prayer by beginning with prayer and adding prayers of thanksgiving after committee reports and stories of "success." We now follow Olsen's suggestion of assigning someone to listen throughout the meeting for items needing prayer. The list is addressed in prayer at the end of the meeting with members going forth holding those issues and people in prayer. Several times we have called a "time out" for prayer when the vestry seems divided over an issue or something is not being resolved. During this time Olsen suggests we ask ourselves such questions as "Am I closing myself off from information that we need to make this decision? Whom do I need to forgive to be fully present here? What is an image of God that needs to come to bear in this setting?"[94] This openness to God in prayer and this openness to the "other" in meditation create the possibility for personal transformation to order four, or possibly even five, at least for a moment.

Another dimension of transforming the vestry is to invite them into a creative process. Since taking the EDS Leadership course in January, 2005 I have attempted opening each vestry meeting with some creative, non-verbal exercise. So far this has been met with enthusiasm, laughter, a sense of community and with a creativity that has extended throughout the meeting. It brings people out of "problem-solving" mode and into the creative talents each person has been gifted with.

Even with these practices the vestry can stray into the minutia of unrelated items. C. Kirk Hadaway writes: "The pastor must help the congregation reduce, simplify, reframe and refocus its agenda on key elements that are central to its purpose."[95] This is a focus I need to express. Now with our conscious attempt to move along the *Social*

Justice Continuum from charity and service to advocacy, I need to express that commitment to the vestry. At each meeting, I should name all the items discussed that count as charity and service, express gratitude for them and then ask the question: "How might that lead to advocacy?"

The vestry has responsibility for the overall health of the parish and this necessitates financial accountability and an honest assessment of some non-financial church numbers. Is church attendance going up or down? Is our membership growing or decreasing? Even so, we must not fall into what Heifetz and Linsky call "the myth of measurement."

> We have rarely met a human being who, after years of professional life, has not bought into the myth of measurement and been debilitated by it. After all, there is powerful pressure in our culture to measure the fruits of our labors, and we feel enormous pride as we take on "greater" responsibility and gain "greater" authority, wealth, and prestige. And well we should, to a degree. But using measurement as a device is not the same as believing that measurement captures the essential value of anything. You cannot measure the good you do.[96]

Involvement in advocacy and personal transformation can never fall prey to the "myth of measurement." (I write this despite the survey tool I used in this chapter and Kegan's five orders of consciousness that have been presented constantly in this thesis project.) Charity can be measured. "Last year we gave $1000 to Rural and Migrant Ministry in the Coins for Change program." Even service can be measured. "We rebuilt three houses for Katrina victims." Episcopal Charities of New York estimates one million "touches" last year of people fed, educated, cared for, etc. Advocacy has no measurement. It means standing with the other where the other is. It might mean enduring loss rather than gain. It is a giving of the heart, obviously unmeasurable. And personal

transformation is real, for it is a movement in the soul that cannot be measured but only glimpsed.

A Personal Lesson in Leadership

Lois MacGillivary of the Duke Institute for Non-Profit Leadership combines the insights of Ron Heifetz and Robert Kegan to develop this insight:

> Robert Kegan stresses the need to distinguish the role from the self, but doing that implies learning to listen to oneself, externalizing conflict, finding sanctuary and partners, and preserving a sense of purpose. Kegan says this is important because we can never keep everyone happy. How Heifetz put it is that "Leaders are always disappointing someone." The question becomes how does one live with an inner poise in meeting the competing demands of the leadership role. Kegan would say, "How do we become self-employed at whatever role we have- we have the role instead of the role having us?"[97]

Here is how I learned the truth of that insight. I became passionately involved in the development and promotion of "A Call for Compassion." I scrutinized the text for weeks, making sure it was just right and made an iron-clad case. I actually wrote it and rewrote it so many times the Latino Ministry committee was getting impatient with me. Finally, it was done. It was presented to the parish and people were signing on. I received an email from a parishioner, Barry Schnoor. He very respectfully said he would not sign, even though he agreed with the cause. He told me how hard this decision was for him because he wants to be loyal to the church. "Three consciousness" was at work in him but he went to another level in sending this email to me. The biblical quotes I used in the text were too judgmental for him. One example was my use of "He who says he loves God whom he does not see, but hates his neighbor whom he does see, is a liar." He felt I was

saying anyone who disagreed with me was a liar. Barry was using order four consciousness – and I was not. I realized Barry was right. I had put so much passion in this, had identified so much with the role of prophet – even as the thought that people would be angry and disappointed with me was eating at me- that I had overstated the case and turned away allies like Barry. I did the only right thing – I changed the text before it went to the printer and put in quotes regarding "neighbor" that were strong but not judgmental. Barry and his wife both signed. Barry saved this leader from himself.

The Open-end Conclusion

Robert Kegan's "model of the development of the self" is based on the truth that the self is multi-dimensional and never complete. That is certainly true of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership ultimately surrenders to this insight of Reinhold Niebuhr:

> The final wisdom of life requires, not the annulment of incongruity but the achievement of serenity within and above it. Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime: therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.[98]

CHAPTER FIVE-TRANSFORMATIONAL SPIRITUALITY IN THE PARISH

In this concluding chapter I will look at three dimensions of spirituality at Grace Church: Ignatian In-Home Retreats, the gift and challenge of Hispanic spirituality and the way we image ourselves in God. Consistent with the main theme of this thesis/project, all of these dimensions will be considered through the lenses of Kegan's development model and the *Continuum of Community Involvement and Transformation.*

"The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius" at Grace Church

As noted in Chapter Two, the dominant model of church at Grace is "Spiritual Pilgrims". One way this is expressed is in the popularity of the In-home Ignatian Retreat that is offered every year, and sometimes twice a year. In the last six years, almost one hundred individuals have made this retreat, many more than once. The format is the "19th Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises."[99] Participants agree to pray once a day with scripture for one month. They meet with a spiritual director once or twice a week during that time.

Each week in the *Spiritual Exercises* has a theme. Knowing that I am in danger of seeing Kegan's model everywhere, I see a correspondence between his "orders of consciousness" and the themes. Let's look at this correspondence and then at the interconnection with social justice.

The theme of the first week is "learning to be fired by great visions and ideals," according to David Fleming, SJ.[100] (Although the four themes are consistent for the

many commentators on the *Exercises*, what they are called varies widely. For this study I will use Fleming's terminology.) The "conversion movement" of this week is from "self-focus to God-focus."[101] Fleming explains: "In the catechetical question, 'Who made me?' and the follow up question, 'Why did God make me?' we have a good example of this priority focus. Even though the question is phrased in terms of the subject *God*, the emphasis is on me and my value and what I do with my life."[102] Looked at through the Kegan lens, this is consciousness order two. I come to the retreat with a need and I find the answer in God as God is presented in the Scriptures.

The theme of the second week is "learning to be a companion and work with."[103] The scriptural stories center on the ministry of Jesus. The conversion movement is from "self-determination to discipleship."[104] This looks like the language of Kegan's stage three. The discipleship learned is a loyalty to the person and mission of Jesus.

The theme of the third week is "learning to be a companion and to suffer with."[105] The scripture readings all concern the passion and death of Jesus. The conversion movement is from "sympathy to compassion."[106] Fleming describes the feelings and perspective of this week in the *Exercises*: "It is a very rich and privileged moment in being a disciple, staying with Jesus, even to death. It is a further movement from the doing (with Jesus) 'for the kingdom', for the reign of God, to now giving and paying the cost (with Jesus), and so truly 'entering' into the reign."[107] This seems like Kegan's stage four to me – being with the Other. And in terms of the *Continuum*, it is clearly the language of advocacy. Here we move from "doing" to "staying with" and sharing in the suffering. Once again, the movement from stage three development to stage four only

occurs when we cross that social justice threshold from charity and service to advocacy. In my experience as a directee and as a spiritual director of the *Exercises*, this is the most difficult week and the one with the most spiritual depth.

Resurrection stories are prayed in the fourth week. Fleming calls this "learning to be a companion and rejoice with."[108] The conversion movement is from "living in faith to living in realized hope."[109] Here the soul gets to glimpse Kegan's stage five which is open to Mystery working within our stories – to another dimension in our complex selves. The way Kegan describes stage five in the language of the Jewish mystics, Christians express in the depth-dimension of the Resurrection:

> He (Jesus) does not change our personal history and experience. The miracle is not saving us from all the implications of human events and history, both the consequences of our own actions and the chance misfortunes of life; the miracle for the disciple is that this compassionate, consoling Jesus stays with us in the midst of it all. Jesus – Emmanuel- is truly God-with-us.[110]

The great gift of the *Exercises* to Grace Church is its incarnational approach. This is "real world" spirituality. Inner city parish priest and author Kenneth Leech decries the contemporary trend toward escapism in spirituality. He quotes Daniel Berrigan: "In the derangement of our culture, we see that people move towards contemplation in despair, even though unrecognized. They meditate as a way of becoming neutral- to put ground between them and the horror around them…We have a terrible kind of drug called contemplation."[111] In placing the *Continuum* in the "development of the self," we avoid the deadening effects of a misguided contemplation.

Of course, a four week immersion in the spirituality of St. Ignatius does not bring

one conclusively and eternally from Kegan's stage two to stage five. But it does allow the possibility for a glimpse at this depth and further growth in the development of the self through the path of justice and truth. Kenneth Leech expresses this well in his literary dialog with Thomas Merton and Daniel Berrigan:

> What Christian tradition calls contemplation is not a simple clarity, or the "single vision" from which Blake asked to be delivered. It is a sharing in the darkness of God, a way of knowing that subverts the simplistic nostrums of those who fear complexity and obscurity. Merton saw that, if there is to be a deepening of vision and discernment, we need to restore the place of silence and solitude. Solitude is not hostile to communion but necessary to it...The contemplative vision is subversive, as Berrigan memorably wrote, and is threatening to powerful vested interests, for it encourages and fosters a condition of sanctified dissatisfaction and discontent. The contemplative is always asking questions, always probing, motivated by that restlessness of spirit which is the source of creativity. And yet its sense of striving is rooted in a profound, and growing, sense of inner peace, of trust- an interior consciousness of our rootedness in God.[112]

I do not believe we could be doing these experiments in advocacy if we did not have so many people grounded in the experience of the *Exercises*. And the experience of advocacy will lead to greater depth in prayer and the journey of the soul.

Hispanic Spirituality

The inclusion of Latino people in our congregation has brought the gift and challenge of their cultural expression of faith. In this brief overview, I will examine a dimension of the philosophy and a dimension of the theology that supports this spirituality and I will look at them through the lens of Kegan's work. Then I will look at several of the practices of that faith and how they enhance the communal spirituality of Grace Church.

The philosophy (broadly defined) is that of *mestizo*. This phrase has roots in the history of Mexico when a variety of cultures and ethnic groups came together. Theologian Virgilio Elizondo has written extensively on this and a summary of his work can be found in The Future Is Mestizo.[113] Arturo Perez Rodriguez, commenting on Elizondo's work, writes, "*Mestizo* is a way of mixing various experiences to form a 'third way.' Life is not seen as black or white, either-or, one or the other, but as 'perhaps,' 'maybe,' 'possibly this way.' This perspective, this pattern of living, shapes the Hispanic spiritual reality."[114] This ability to live within a variety of possibilities surpasses the more narrow stage three consciousness of Kegan – the consciousness I have identified as the primary one within our churches.

This third way of *mestizo* is necessary because most of our Latino people are experiencing a modern day version of the biblical "exile." The biblical scholar most quoted in this thesis/project, Walter Brueggemann, sees hope as being born in the crisis of exile. But hope can only come when grief is acknowledged:

> Hope is not likely to come then among royal managers, hired intellectuals, or the muted oppressed. Who hopes? Those who enter into their grief, suffering, oppression, who bring it to speech, who publicly process it, and move through it and beyond. They are the ones surprised to find, again and again, that hope and new social responsibility come in the midst of such grief.[115]

Pastoral theologian Stewart Stout applies Brueggemann's insights to the situation of the Latino people who grieve the countries they have left due to economic conditions. "The normal setting for grief, and for the hope it germinates, is the public faith community."[116] The theology of hope that is foundational for Latino spirituality in this country provokes a "prophetic imagining" that involves all people in a society.[117]

"Prophetic imagining has a two-fold movement: deconstruction of the present narrative and power arrangements though public grieving, and construction of new social and theological possibilities by nurturing a new consciousness."[118] The forging of that new consciousness is happening at Grace Church, Millbrook right now. But Stout reminds us there is always a temptation to go back, and in this project that means going back to stage three consciousness:

> Brueggemann challenges those of us from the dominant culture, who, like Jeremiah, are trained and educated, who often have lighter skin, who have access to power brokers, who attempt to live our faith in solidarity with those who are struggling for a more just vision of the reign of God. He reminds me that I will be sorely tempted away from the task of prophetic imagining and towards the role of a court prophet, away from challenging dominant structures and towards conforming to the existing structures, away from envisioning a new future and towards accommodating the present.[119]

At Grace Church we will resist that temptation so long as we embrace the theology of hope that our Latino brothers and sisters offer to us and refuse to go backward in our personal and communal faith journeys. We will resist that temptation if we summon the courage to stand with our neighbors in the present climate of fear and provincialism in the United States.

Now let's look very briefly at some of the aspects of faith practice in the Latino community and how they enhance Grace Church. One of these is the Latino musical expression of faith. The night of our Lady of Guadalupe service, the congregation stayed in the church for twenty minutes after the prepared liturgy was over, spontaneously singing hymns. That enthusiasm is infectious and impacts a denomination sometimes called "God's frozen chosen."

Arturo Perez Rodriguez tells us of another characteristic of Hispanic spirituality: "All celebrations are seen as communal and most of them include prayer, sharing food, and singing/dancing/reciting or composing poetry."[120] This has certainly been our experience of Latino spirituality at Grace Church and it broadens our approach to prayer and community. It is especially important for Latino people in Millbrook because they have no other place to gather for social events outside Grace Church.

Rodriguez writes, "God is found in the arms of the Virgin Mary. She is at the heart of spirituality."[121] This is an opportunity and a challenge to Episcopalians. As one priest said to me when she heard we were reaching out to Latino people: "I hope you are not going to have one of those god-awful Lady of Guadalupe services." We did and it was wonderful. The Latino theology of Mary will challenge us to articulate a renewed appreciation for Mary and offer the opportunity to enter into dialog with what that theology might look like in an inclusive Episcopal Church. And it gives Latino and Anglo people the possibility of living into the vision of the Magnificat in which the lowly are raised up and the mighty laid low.

Parish Self-Understanding Transformed

In September, 2006 I passed out a survey during the sermon. The survey (one I developed) listed the following dimensions of Jesus Christ: healer, forgiver of sins, imaginative preacher, exorcist, prophet, helper of the poor, wisdom figure, person of prayer. The survey then asked four questions: 1) with which dimension of Jesus are you most comfortable; 2) which dimension of Jesus is most challenging to you personally; 3)

what dimension of Jesus do we express well at Grace Church; 4) what dimension of Jesus is lacking at Grace Church?

185 people filled out the survey. To the first question (the dimension of Jesus which is most comfortable for you) there were a variety of answers but the majority was either "healer" or "forgiver of sins." To the second question (the most challenging dimension of Jesus) the vast majority of responders said "prophet." This is as it should be. If we are not challenged by the prophet then we are probably not paying attention to what is being said. Although I have no earlier survey to compare this, I interpret this as good news for a church leaning into social justice. At least we are hearing the prophetic challenge of Jesus.

To the third question (what dimension of Jesus do we express well at Grace Church), the most votes went to "imaginative preaching" but "helper of the poor" came in a close second. Although I cannot back it up with statistical data, I am sure people would not have said this about Grace just a couple of years ago. This does not prove we have moved on the *Continuum* from charity and service to advocacy. Many might have responded the way they did while thinking of charity or service. But I choose to believe our newspaper ad standing with those who are denied drivers' licenses made a symbolic impact on this community that has reached deeply into our communal soul. Anecdotal evidence that his is true comes from people outside the church. I have been told several times "anything progressive going on in the local churches is happening at Grace." A county based foundation sought us out because they heard of what we are doing for immigrants and urged us to apply for a grant.

The final question on the survey (what dimension of Jesus do we lack at Grace) was answered by the majority as "exorcist." I had been careful in explaining in the survey presentation that exorcist did not mean "heads spinning around backwards." I described it as meaning Jesus set people free from whatever possesses them. That could be material things (like the rich young man who turned away from Jesus offer of healing) or it could be anger, jealousy, pride or whatever else might possess us. I'm still considering what this means for our understanding of ourselves as a parish. It could mean we need to provide more opportunities to grow beyond whatever stage of consciousness we find ourselves.

It seems in these past few months, the Sunday lectionary has consistently made some reference to welcoming the stranger or expanding our consciousness to include "the other". Just one example of many is the story of Jesus placing a little child among his disciples and saying "He who welcomes one such as this, welcomes me." Children in the culture of Jesus' day represented the vulnerable and the ignored. When I have preached on this topic, I always point out how well Grace Church is doing in fulfilling this biblical mandate of welcoming the vulnerable and ignored of our society (immigrants.) Because there has been a change in consciousness, this is readily accepted as "this is who we are."

On All Saints' Sunday I spoke about the saints that most express the spirituality of Grace Church. Because we have outstanding pastoral care (recall we are a "Spiritual Pilgrims" church) I said the saints that characterize Grace are the "Martyrs of Memphis." The Martyrs of Memphis are those Episcopal nuns who stayed to care for the sick and dying of that city when a yellow fever epidemic broke out in 1878 (the second such

outbreak in five years) and all the doctors and nurses fled. Those courageous religious women were joined by other Episcopal nuns and clergy from New York who came to the ravaged city knowing the disease would claim their lives as well. When illness strikes anyone at Grace Church, the community always rallies around with care on many levels. Exceptional pastoral care is part of our identity.

In that same sermon I invited the congregation to think of a saint they need personally. After leading a meditation and personal reflection on that, I said the saint we need at Grace Church is Edna Tylsley. Edna died three years ago, but everyone still remembers her. She was a one person hospitality committee. At her funeral I asked how many gathered in the church that day had been greeted at Grace by Edna before anyone else. Three quarters of the congregation in that packed church raised their hands. On All Saints Sunday, 2006, I said we need St. Edna now. We need her gift of hospitality. That call was met with great approval. We know what we have to do. We are moving out of stage three consciousness.

Concluding Image

We have a big fifteen passenger van for our Youth Ministry. We bought it used a few years ago. It is one of only a dozen vans in the U.S. that is painted in the flowery colors of the "Mystery Machine" – a bus famous in the children's television show "Scooby Doo." Everywhere the van goes, it gets lots of attention.

Three times the van has been used for trips to Mississippi on Katrina Relief missions. Volunteers go there to rebuild homes ravaged by the hurricane. At one stop, a

child stared intently at the van. He asked us who owned this awesome van. We said "our church." The child responded "That must be some fun church!"

At other stops, our volunteers were asked where they were going. When they said where and why, people spontaneously gave money.

Grace Church, a fun church, gathers people generous in charity and willing to serve. The van will pick them up but the Church is not stopping there.

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Appendix A

Continuum of Community Involvement and Social Transformation

	Charity	Service	Advocacy	Justice (love and power)
Giving	*give money	*give time	*give heart	*give empowerment
Relationship	*distance	*temporary exposure	*changes outlook	*develop network
Method	*immediate satisfaction	*educational	*evangelistic	*organize community
Focus	*on problem	*on person	*on causes	*on system
Social Motives	*guilt	*social	*moral	*shared power
Social Power	*access	*sustainability	*equity	*transformation

A CALL FOR COMPASSION

Appendix B

We, the undersigned members of Grace Episcopal Church, Millbrook, call for an end to New York State's practice of requiring that all applicants for a driver's license present the DMV with a Social Security number. Effectively, the State (unlike most other states) requires proof of legal immigrant status.

Such status has nothing to do with the ability to drive a car safely. Denying licenses to immigrants who are without social security numbers works against the common good. Ensuring that all drivers are tested, licensed, and able to obtain auto insurance and register their vehicles would better protect public safety. Current State regulations are forcing many immigrants further into the shadows, adding to the burden of fear and insecurity they face every day as they try to provide for their families.

The Judeo-Christian tradition is rooted in love of "The Other" and in welcome to all God's people. This is within the context of thousands of biblical injunctions to help the poor. Here is just a small sampling of what God asks of us:

"If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself—for once you were strangers in Egypt."
—Leviticus 19:32-33

"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it'—when you have it with you."
—Proverbs 3:27-28

"Jesus asked him, 'Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' The lawyer said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"
—Luke 10:36-37

The Reverend Douglas Fisher, Rector

The Reverend Jennifer Creswell, Pastoral Associate

Stuart Armstrong
Virginia Augerson
William S. Augerson, M.D.
Barbara Bagnold
Jim Ball
Mary Louise Ball
Irene Banning
Jack Banning
Alfred Berti
Melanie Berti
William Burrows
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Walter M. Cadette
Kathryn Calame
Doug Capers
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Courtney Collins
Eric Coufal
Birdi Davis
Brenda DeMartine
Ian Heston Doescher
Robert Dyson
Margaret G. Fettes
The Rev. Elizabeth Fisher
Denis P. Freeman
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Dorothy Glass
Ivonne M. Gomez
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Robert W. Gunther
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Candi Herguth
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Ida Leung
Dianne A. McNeil
Garrett Meigs
Jane H. Meigs
Jonathan Meigs
Francis L. Montgomery
Maurice F. Neville
Virginia A. Neville
Betty Rae Nittiskie
Holly Noone
Barbara Renfroe
Elton Renfroe
Lisa Roach
Erin Rollins
Matthew Rollins
George E. Rudgers
Margaret J. Rudgers
Barbara Rudy
John Rudy
Barry Schnoor
Diane Schnoor
Barbara Schumacher
Bryant W. Seaman III
Bryant Seaman IV
Rebecca Martin Seaman
Mark Sheehan
Kathleen Smith
Robin Somers-Capers
Javier Gomez Soria
Charlotte M. Stearns
James W. Sweeny
Sophia D. Sweeny
Gleed Thompson
Marian G. Thompson
Felicitas Thorne
Joan L. Vogel
Lucy Von Stirum
Ann Westney
Karen Whitton
Amanda Wilson
Paula Wilson
Dana Wood

"As Christians, we are called to remember the Gospel mandate to extend hospitality to the stranger. As Episcopalians, we embrace a baptismal covenant that requires that we seek and serve Christ in all persons."
—The Most Reverend Frank Griswold,
Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church

Appendix C
May 7, 2006
Sermon by The Rev. Douglas Fisher

My sermons are usually ten to twelve minutes long. This one will be closer to fifteen. But I promise over the next couple of months I will preach a six minute sermon so it will average out.

In this time, I will present a summary of another preacher's sermon; offer an opportunity to help our neighbors; and take a look at the resurrected life. Here we go.

Earlier this week I attended the priests' retreat for the Diocese of New York. It was led by Dr. James Forbes, the pastor of Riverside Church. He is a great, dynamic preacher. When I grow up I want to be like Dr. Forbes. Sometimes when he preached, he would break into song. I'm going to offer you a summary of one of his sermons, but for your sake I won't sing any part of it.

The text was Luke chapter four in which Jesus comes forward to read in the synagogue for the first time. He is handed the scroll of Isaiah and he reads: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of the sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And then he sat down.

Dr. Forbes pointed out that Jesus read from Isaiah chapter 61. But there is a line that Jesus left out. Right after the place where Jesus ends, the text reads: "and the day of vengeance or our God". Jesus left that line out and everyone knew it because they were so familiar with the scriptures. Jesus is saying something new. He will not be declaring a God of vengeance.

The crowd was furious. They expected God to come with glory and peace and happiness *for them* and vengeance for all who had opposed them through the centuries. Jesus makes the crowd even angrier by going on to talk about two healings described in the bible – both healings were done for foreigners. This made the crowd so mad "they got up, drove him out of town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he past through the midst of them and went on his way."

Forbes tells us this story illustrates the pattern of Jesus' life: from praise to persecution. And as followers of Jesus that will be the pattern for us as well. More about that in a moment. Forbes ended his sermon by telling us about the time his five year old grandson heard him preach on Luke 4. The little boy wondered how Jesus got away when he was surrounded by all those angry people at the cliff. Forbes told his grandson he did not know and asked him how he thought Jesus did it. The little boy thought and said, "Jesus just upped and out. He just upped and out." And he will do that again later – in the tomb. Jesus will up and out. Hatred cannot hold him down. Death cannot hold him down. And that will be another pattern for us as well.

From praise to persecution. I had a slight experience of that a few weeks ago. I participated in a march of solidarity with Latino and Anglo people in Hyde Park. The event was organized by the husband of Holly Moore – the wonderful fourth grade teacher here in Millbrook. We marched in front of a huge banner that read: "Love Casts Out Fear – Not People". A person carrying a cross led the way. At one point I took a turn carrying the cross. I used to carry crosses in marches all the time years ago but this one seemed much heavier than I remember. They must be making the cross out of a different type of wood these days. As we marched along Route 9, the majority of drivers honked their horns in support. Some gave us obscene gestures. One person spit at me. From praise to persecution – that is the pattern of Christ's life. And that is who we follow.

Now for the opportunity to help our neighbors. Following that story you probably think this is going to be about immigration. But it is not. Immigration is a deep and complex issue in our country and people of good will have a vast variety of opinions about it. The president has a position. The Senate is trying to coming to a position. The churches have positions on immigration. All have validity. There is one position that has no validity in my opinion. That is the bill passed by the House of Representatives. I join my little voice to that of Roman Catholic bishops and Episcopal bishops who have described that bill as evil, cruel and sinful.

There are many opinions about immigration right here at Grace Church. Remember we are not the Body of Christ because we agree with each other – we are the Body of Christ because we care about each other.

There is one issue concerning our Latino brothers and sisters that we can all rally behind no matter what our political opinion. It concerns the New York State drivers' license law that says only people with social security numbers can have drivers' licenses. We are one of only seven states that demands a social security number to qualify for a license. Because of this law, in the next year 300,000 people will lose their licenses. In our meetings with Latino people, they have consistently told us that this law makes their lives very hard. You can understand this. Think about what your life would be like if you did not have a driver's license.

One of our parishioners, Walter Cadette, writes: "Denying licenses to immigrants who are without Social Security numbers, in fact, impedes law enforcement by creating a class of people for whom there are no public records. More important, it jeopardizes road safety by forcing many immigrants to drive without a license, and to fail to register their vehicles and to obtain insurance (they cannot do so without valid licenses). It adds to the incentive to flee the scene of an accident. Ensuring that all drivers were tested, licensed, and able to obtain auto insurance and register their vehicles would better protect the public safety."

Let me add voices from other people of faith in other parts of the country with similar laws. The Florida Catholic Conference says "Our current license laws punish and exclude some of the most vulnerable and hardworking people in our communities, yet they do not

achieve their stated purpose of making our communities more secure or law abiding." An organization of rabbis in California write: "We are strongly opposed to the governor's suggestion that a marker or identifier be placed on driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants. It is inappropriate at best and deeply upsetting at worst. It will be used to treat the undocumented with scorn and ethnic discrimination." The Lutheran Church says "these tactics drive undocumented people further into the shadows and undermine community health and safety."

Jesus said: "whenever you give a cup of cold water to one of these in my name, you did it for me." I'm inviting you to do the equivalent of giving water to someone who is thirsty – give the right to a driver's license to people who need it to work, to bring children to school, to bring the sick to doctors. We are going to take out an ad in the Millbrook Roundtable – paid for by a private donation- in which we say "we the undersigned of Grace Church call for an end to the New York State law that requires a social security number to qualify for a drivers' license." The ad entitled *A CALL FOR COMPASSION* gives our biblical and theological reasons for doing this. Including the words of Leviticus: "If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself- for once you were strangers in Egypt."

I can't do this topic justice even in a sermon – even a fifteen minute one. If you want to know more about this issue and about this symbolic action, Jack Banning and Walter Cadette will be available at coffee hour to continue the discussion. I urge you to consider adding your name to *A CALL FOR COMPASSION.*

Now briefly to the gospel and resurrected life. Today we heard the story of the Good Shepherd. Sheep have an unjustified reputation for being dumb. They got that reputation from the battle for land between shepherds and cowboys in the Midwest back in the 1800's. The cowboys disparaged the sheep in comparison to the cows they drove. But that is the operative word – "drove". Cows are driven with whips from people on horses behind them. That would never work with sheep. Sheep will only move when they can follow a leader out in front. Sheep demand that someone goes first so they can see what happens to them. That's not so dumb. When Jesus identifies himself with the Good Shepherd he is telling us he will go first. He will go from self-alone thinking to self-for-others action. He will go from protecting what he has to giving what he has away. And he invites us to follow him. And he will "up and out" from the tomb to resurrection – and we will follow. With Jesus leading the way, there is nothing to be afraid of. Not even death.

The early church understood this. A key moment for the church came in Rome around 120 A.D. The church was growing but was still a minority. The plague struck Rome. Even in those days people understood what "contagious" meant. When pagan Romans contracted the disease, their families and friends put them out into the street to die. Christians, however, because they were unafraid of death, would care for their diseased loved ones. They would nurture the sick, knowing they were risking infection themselves.

When the plague receded from Rome, it was noticed that far more of the infected Christians had lived through it than the pagans. They lived because they had been cared for. More and more pagans began to inquire about this new religion called "The Way".

The Way of Jesus can change the world. He has gone first and showed us how to do it. May we follow and in so doing "up and out" to a New Life. Do not be afraid. Amen.

Appendix D
May 21, 2006
Sermon by The Rev. Douglas Fisher

(This sermon relies on the display of four posters with numerous crisscrossing lines representing political opinions.)
For the past couple of weeks there has been a lively and healthy discussion going on among Grace Church members regarding the New York State law that requires a social security number to obtain a driver's license. It leads me to reflect on how complex the political landscape is here. To understand exactly how complex it is, I invite you to consider a series of charts I have drawn up.

(holds up first chart) Here is how this chart works. I chose five random parishioners who have expressed to me their opinions on a variety of political issues. I will not reveal their names. I chose four unrelated "hot button" political issues: the war in Iraq, the school budget, gay rights in the church, the gas crisis. Then I drew lines from the "person" to where they stand on that issue. So person "A" here supports the war in Iraq, votes for the school budget, opposes the blessing of gay unions and the election of Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, and thinks there should be windfall taxes imposed on the oil companies. Person "B" opposes the war in Iraq, supports gay rights within the church, but agrees with Person "A" in voting for the school budget and calling for restraints on the oil companies. Person "C" agrees with Person "B" in opposing the war, and agrees with Person "B" in supporting gay rights, but votes against the school budget and believes gas prices should be as high as they are because that is the real cost of what we are doing to the environment. Person "D" supports the war, votes against the school budget, supports gay rights, and thinks nothing should be done about gas prices. Look at all these crisscrossing lines. Person "E" makes it even more complex.

(holds up second chart) But it is even more complicated than that. This chart takes the same people and the same issues, but shows how there are vast differences even when people seem to agree. This person supported going to war but thinks it is a disaster and we should leave. This person opposed going to war but thinks we now have no choice but to stay. This person voted against the school budget but will vote for a compromise budget. This person will vote against that one as well. And on and on.

(holds up third chart) Now lets keep those same five people and add more issues: immigration, abortion rights, Darfur, capital punishment, environment. This chart is starting to look like a Jackson Pollock painting.

That's just 5 people. We have 500 people on our parish roles. If we take into account their opinions on all these issues our chart looks like this. *(Holds up charts with hundreds of intersecting lines.)*

That's my parish. And I love them all. Allow me a few minutes to talk about my role in this community of faith and then go on to the vision of Jesus.

The two most important things a priest does are pastoral care and preaching. Two pastoral care stories for you. One time back at West Point, I'm jogging when Mike, an army major and a member of my parish runs up with several cadets and asks if I want to join them. I foolishly say "yes" – these guys don't jog, they run. As we start out, Mike says: "Gentlemen, this is Father Doug Fisher. He is our Episcopal chaplain." And then, in his best Texas drawl, Mike says: "He is one of those progressives. But we love him anyway."

We were together at West Point for a few years and then Mike retired from the Army and moved to New Mexico. We kept up, talking on the phone every few weeks. Mike vehemently opposed the invasion of Iraq. And he also strongly opposed the election of Gene Robinson and the blessing of gay unions. Mike and I both love the Episcopal Church but we are on opposite sides of the gay rights issue. One time we were talking about this and Mike got so angry he hung up on me.

Within minutes he called back. He said, "Doug, you were there for me in the darkest hour of my life. And in the second, third, fourth and fifth darkest hours of my life. We will probably always disagree on gay rights but you will always be my friend and my priest." Another time here at Grace I was bringing communion to a parishioner who was ill. This person supports gay rights in the church, and he supports the war. We prayed together, we laughed, we spoke of deep things. And then he said, "Doug, we are never going to let a war come between us." He is absolutely right. We are not the Body of Christ because we agree with each other: we are the Body of Christ because we care about each other.

My other most important role here is preaching. I love preaching but there are two things that make it a challenge. One is a statement I carry around in my head that one of my sisters-in-law said. Speaking about preachers, she offered this profound advice: "Live like Gandhi or shut up." Since I do not live like Gandhi, when I preach I do so with huge doses of justified humility. I sincerely pray that the inconsistencies in my life do not get in the way of Jesus' saving message.

And it is a challenge to preach because the gospel causes conflict in a complex world. But a fear of conflict must not paralyze us. Come with me for a moment back to 1860. The Episcopal Church is having its triennial General Convention. Think about what was going on in the United States in 1860, the eve of the Civil War. The Convention passed numerous resolutions but did not say one thing about slavery! The bishops and the delegates were afraid it would cause conflict.

Read the gospels. Conflict follows Jesus wherever he goes. Jesus proclaims a kingdom of mercy, compassion, non-violent peace, hope for the poor, the radical equality and dignity of all God's people, and the transforming power of God's love in this world.. The kingdom that Jesus brings will always be in conflict with the kingdoms of this world.

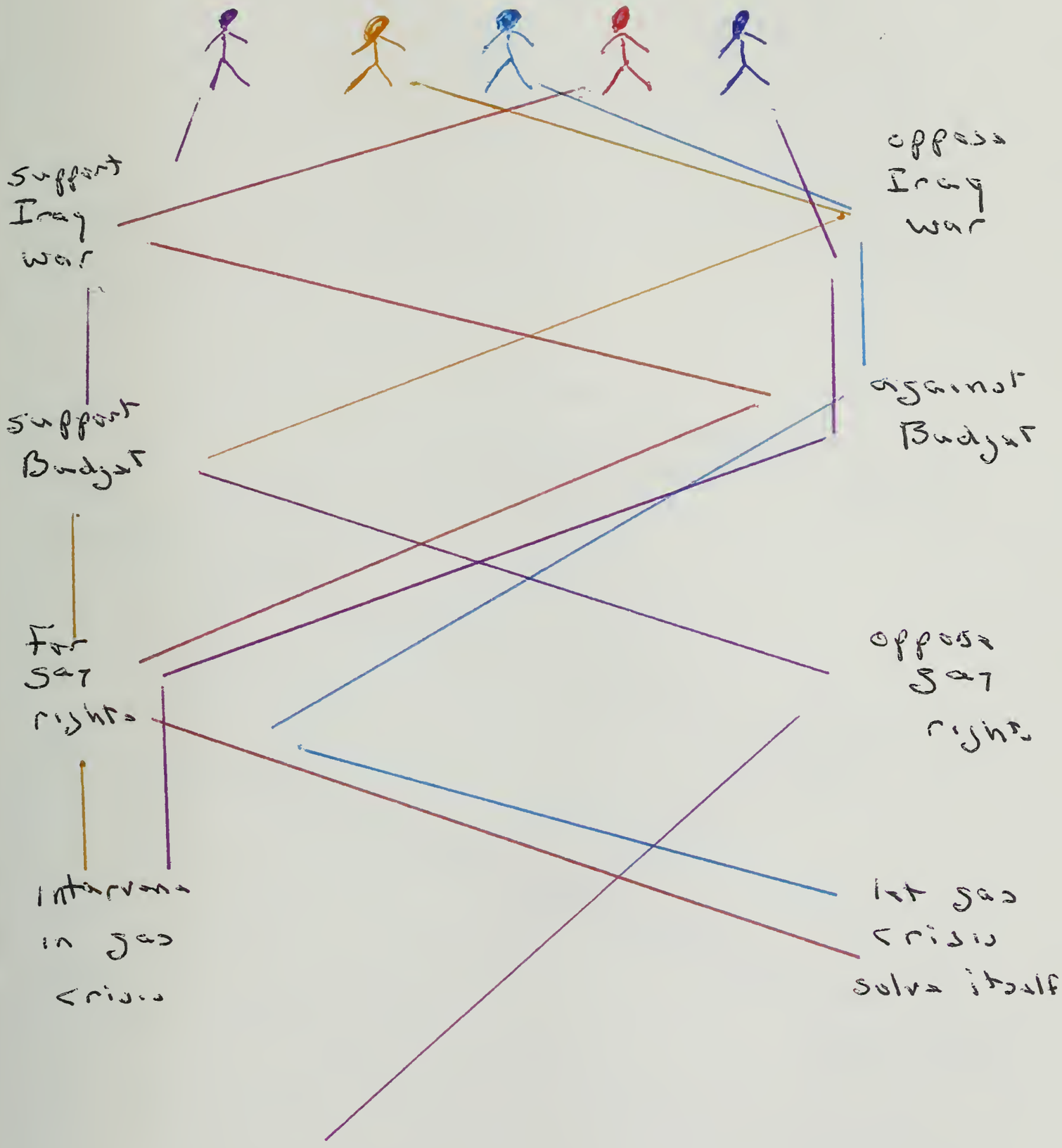
Theologian Garry Wills has a new book I highly recommend to you called <u>What Jesus Meant</u> He writes: "Jesus subscribed to no political program. He was far more radical than that… Jesus followers have the obligation that rests on all men and women to seek

justice based on the dignity of every human being. That is the goal of politics, of 'the things that belong to Caesar'. But heaven's reign makes deeper and broader demands, the demands not only of justice but of love."

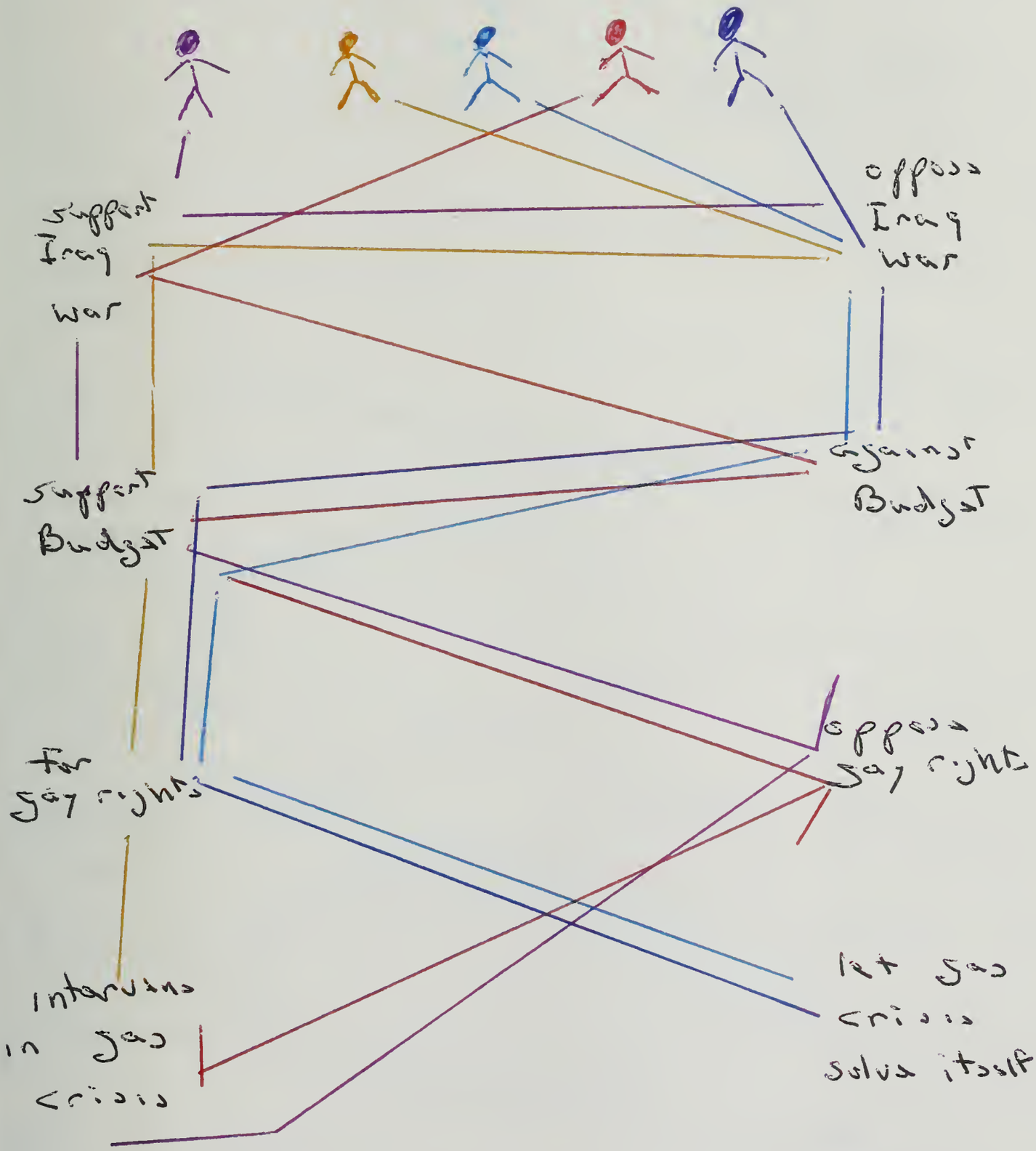
What is love demanding of us? That's what makes the kingdom of God different from all other kingdoms. We must consider what is right, what is logical, what is good, what is just, what is fair. But then as followers of Jesus we must ask "what is love demanding of us?" In many cases there will not be an obvious answer to that question. We need to wrestle with the answers and we may get different answers. Look at that chart. But we may never run from that question: "what does love demand from us in this situation, in this time and place?"

And so we pray: Jesus give us the courage to respond to what love demands. Open us to your answers. Open us to a hope-filled future where you reign in a kingdom of mercy, compassion, peace and love. Jesus we all desire that future. Guide us with your Spirit. Amen.

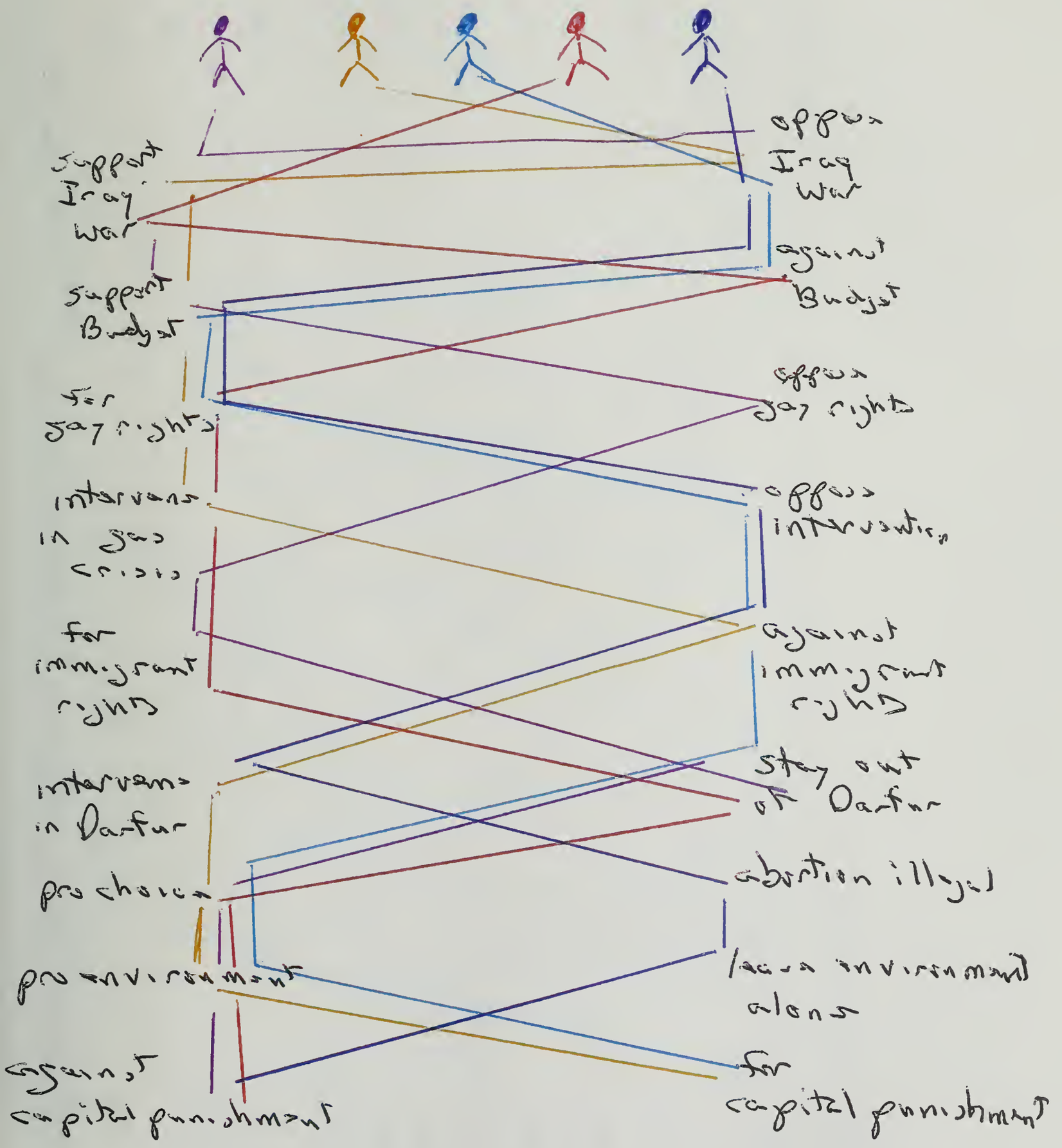
Appendix E


Support Iraq war
Oppose Iraq war
Support Budget
Against Budget
Let gay right
Oppose gay right
Intervene in gas crisis
Let gas crisis solve itself

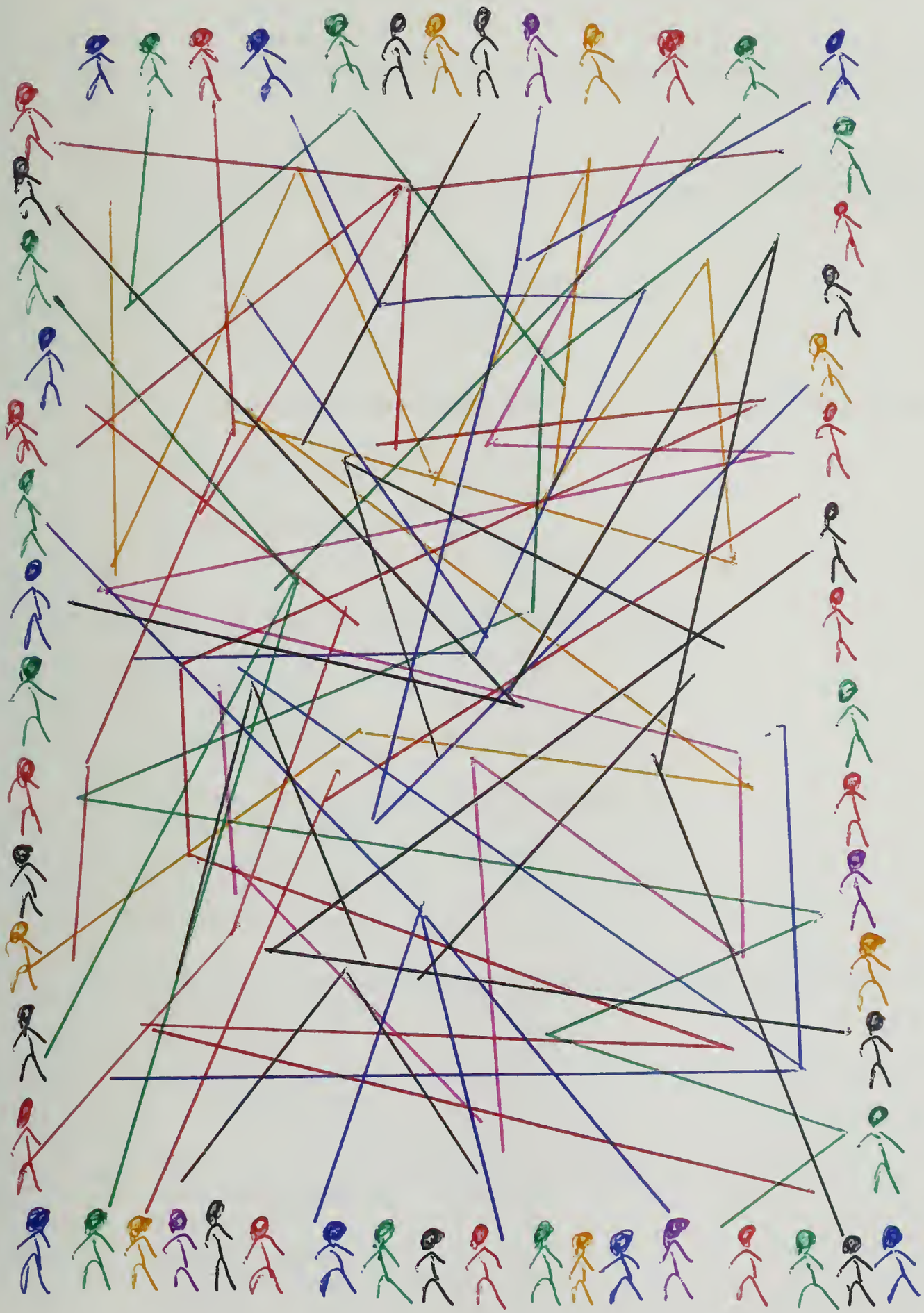
Appendix F


Support Iraq War
Oppose Iraq War
Support Budget
Against Budget
Support Gay rights
Oppose Gay rights
Intervene in Gay crisis
Let Gay crisis solve itself

Appendix G


oppose Iraq War
support Iraq War
against Budget
support Budget
oppose gay rights
for gay rights
oppose intervention
intervene in Sudan crisis
against immigrant rights
for immigrant rights
stay out of Darfur
intervene in Darfur
abortion illegal
pro choice
face environment alone
pro environment
for capital punishment
against capital punishment

Appendix H



Appendix I

Parish Profile Inventory
(The first number given in each response is for July 2005. The second number given is May, 2006.)

Tasks of the Church

1. Offering worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and the Christian tradition.

Needs More Emphasis	0	0
Very Satisfied	12	14
Generally Satisfied	3	1
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

2. Providing worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms.

Needs More Emphasis	0	0
Very Satisfied	12	14
Generally Satisfied	3	0
Too Much Emphasis	0	1

3. Providing Christian education for children and youth.

Needs More Emphasis	0	0
Very Satisfied	13	13
Generally Satisfied	2	2
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

4. Providing Christian Education programs for adults.

Needs More Emphasis	0	0
Very Satisfied	12	12
Generally Satisfied	3	3
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

5. Helping members deepen their personal, spiritual relationship with God.

Needs More Emphasis	0	0
Very Satisfied	15	15
Generally Satisfied	0	0
Too much Emphasis	0	0

6. Sharing the Good News of the Gospel with the unchurched.

Needs More Emphasis	10	3
Very Satisfied	1	10
Generally Satisfied	4	2
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

7. Engaging in acts of charity and service to persons in need.

Needs More Emphasis	2	1
Very Satisfied	5	11
Generally satisfied	8	3
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

8. Encouraging members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political and economic issues.

Needs More Emphasis	1	0
Very Satisfied	10	13
Generally satisfied	4	1
Too Much Emphasis	0	1

9. Providing a caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins, and the bereaved.

Needs More Emphasis	0	0
Very Satisfied	15	15
Generally Satisfied	0	0
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

10. Providing pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems.

Needs More Emphasis	0	0
Very Satisfied	15	15
Generally Satisfied	0	0
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

11. Providing fellowship opportunities for members.

Needs More Emphasis	2	3
Very Satisfied	11	11
Generally satisfied	2	1
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

12. Helping members understand their use of money, time and talents as expressions of Christian stewardship.

Needs More Emphasis	1	1
Very Satisfied	10	9
Generally Satisfied	4	5
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

13. Supporting the global mission of the church.

Needs More Emphasis	2	1
Very Satisfied	8	8
Generally Satisfied	6	7
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

14. Helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service.

Needs More Emphasis	2	2
Very Satisfied	7	8
Generally Satisfied	6	5
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

15. Participating in activities with other religious groups.

Needs More Emphasis	6	5
Very Satisfied	4	4
Generally Satisfied	5	5
Too Much Emphasis	0	1

16. Advocating on behalf of the oppressed.

Needs More Emphasis	2	2
Very Satisfied	3	13
Generally satisfied	10	0
Too Much Emphasis	0	0

Organizational Characteristics

(The first number given is for July, 2005 and the second number is for May, 2006.)

1. Members are well informed about what the various committees and groups in the church are doing.

Strong	5	7
Moderate	9	7
Slight	0	1
Disagree	1	0

2. The activities taking place in the congregation are well publicized to the surrounding community.

Strong	4	7
Moderate	10	8
Slight	1	0
Disagree	0	0

3. Study of the needs of the congregation and community is regularly undertaken as the basis for church planning.

Strong	3	4
Moderate	11	11
Slight	1	0

4. Members and groups get a lot of support and encouragement for trying something new in the congregation.

Strong	13	14
Moderate	2	1
Slight	0	0
Disagree	0	0

5. Members are encouraged to discover their particular gifts for ministry and service.

Strong	10	10
Moderate	5	5
Slight	0	0
Disagree	0	0

6. Lay leaders are provided the training they need for their committee and task assignments.

Strong	3	4
Moderate	10	9
Slight	1	1
Disagree	0	1

7. Every member who is capable and interested has an equal opportunity to hold key leadership positions.

Strong	10	10
Moderate	5	4
Slight	0	1
Disagree	0	0

8. The theological and biblical implications of important decisions are regularly discussed.

Strong	10	12
Moderate	4	3
Slight	1	0
Disagree	0	0

9. Important church decisions about the life of the church are rarely made without open discussion by church leaders and members.

Strong	4	4
Moderate	10	11
Slight	1	0
Disagree	0	0

10. Disagreements and conflicts are dealt with openly rather than behind closed doors.

Strong	4	12
Moderate	11	3
Slight	0	0
Disagree	0	0

11. It is easy to summarize for visitors and non-members how our congregation differs from other congregations in the area.

Strong	12	14
Moderate	3	1
Slight	0	0
Disagree	0	0

12. Members help each other in times of trouble.

Strong	14	14
Moderate	1	1
Slight	0	0
Disagree	0	0

13. Cooperative programs with churches of other denominations are highly valued in our church.

Strong	0	0
Moderate	7	7
Slight	6	6
Disagree	2	2

14. The current morale of our church is high.

Strong	11	11
Moderate	4	4
Slight	0	0
Disagree	0	0

15. There is a sense of excitement among members about our church's future.

Strong	11	11
Moderate	4	4
Slight	0	0
Disagree	0	0

Congregational Identity

(I have adapted the format of this survey to contrasting the two statements with the numbers to the right representing the votes in 2006 and then in 2006.In the survey itself, respondents graded the church in degrees from "1" being most like the first characteristic and "7" being most like the characteristic on the left. My summary here does not show the degrees of opinion.)

1. Our church is more influenced by history and tradition. 9 8
   Our church is more influenced by contemporary trends. 6 7

2. Members are similar to the people who live immediately around the church. 14 13
   Members are different from those who live around the church. 1 2

3. Our church is very involved with the community around the church. 13 15
   Our church is not involved with the community around the church. 2 0

4. Our church is primarily oriented to serving our members. 7 4
   Our church is primarily oriented to serving the world beyond our membership. 8 11

5. Our congregation feels like one large family. 6 7
   Our congregation feels like a loosely knit association of individuals and groups. 9 8

6. Our church is known as the prestigious one in the area. 4 4
   Our strengths not withstanding, our church is not considered one of the status churches in the area. 11 11

7. Our church's approach to social issues is basically educational, leaving any action to individual conscience. 4 13
   Our church's approach to social issues is decidedly activist. We take stands on social issues as a congregation. 11 3

8. Our congregation's approach to individual salvation emphasizes education, nurture and gradual growth in faith. 15 15
   Our congregation's approach to individual salvation stress conversion and a born-again experience. 0 0

9. Our congregation gives strong expression to our denominational identity and heritage. 13 14
   It would be difficult for a visitor to know to which denomination our congregation belongs. 2 1

10. Our congregation strives to create partnerships with other congregations. 6 6
    Our congregation prefers to work by ourselves or through our denominational channels. 9 9

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